Field Manual To Ranked Choice Voting

Lessons From The Last Frontier

Learn about Ranked Choice Voting and Why It is Bad for America

Izon Education

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Illusion of Choice

Welcome to "Rank Choice Voting – Illusion of Choice." In this book, we will embark on a comprehensive exploration of one of the most significant aspects of the democratic process: elections. Specifically, we will delve into the realm of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) and critically examine its claims, impacts, and potential consequences in US elections.

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Introduction

We like to start our presenations off by asking some very simple questions about Rank(ed) Choice Voting.

Let's discuss the merits of RCV in a simple terminology:
Is it Better? Why
Is it cheaper? Why
Is it faster? How?
Does it increase turnout? Proof
Does it eliminates spoiler candidates? Proof
Does it help 3rd parties? Proof
It produces an absolute majority? Proof

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) appears appealing at first glance. It's promoted as a superior system—more cost-effective, efficient, and with the potential to boost voter turnout. Moreover, advocates of RCV argue that it benefits third-party candidates and their voters. Yet, our in-depth research, which encompasses studies from over two dozen cities & over two decades, paints a different picture, raising serious concerns about RCV. Supported by credible sources,

we've amassed evidence indicating the potentially detrimental effects of RCV on third-party candidates and voters.

Governor Gavin Newsom's veto of Ranked Choice Voting in California was grounded in his worries about voter confusion and the unmet promises of enhanced democracy. He advocated for taking lessons from charter cities with RCV in place before considering broader implementation. (1) US Senator Tom Cotton was more forthright, describing RCV as "a scam to rig elections." He emphasized concerns about disenfranchising voters and the potential distortion of electoral outcomes. (2)

In this book, we will examine crucial issues, like voter turnout, and present the concerning data we've unearthed. Our objective is to furnish readers with a comprehensive grasp of the intricate concerns surrounding RCV and its possible implications on elections.

As you delve into these pages, we will pose challenging questions, urging you to critically assess the presented information. We staunchly believe in the importance of well-informed citizens for a thriving Republic. Hence, we aim to arm you with the insights and resources needed for sound decision-making.

Our dedication transcends this publication. We've actively debated the Alaska Pro-RCV group and presented our

findings to large audiences across 10+ states. We've also engaged with current and former Secretaries of State, as well as several Lt. Governors, gleaning from their experiences and insights.

U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan's comments about voter confusion mirror the issues we've identified in our studies. A staggering 95% of our respondents voiced their perplexity about the RCV system, underscoring the urgency to tackle this problem.(3)

Our commitment against RCV remains unwavering. Our website stands as a testament, offering further insights, videos, and updates on our endeavors. We encourage you to explore our site and consider joining our quest to uphold the sanctity and efficacy of our voting process.

We're grateful for your company on this enlightening expedition. Let's jointly unearth the reality of Ranked Choice Voting and its influence on US elections.

Unraveling the Myth: The Flaws of Ranked Choice Voting

In the landscape of political reform, few ideas spark as much debate as Ranked Choice Voting (RCV). Although many champion it as the solution to electoral issues, We remain skeptical of its alleged merits. This book endeavors to demystify RCV, offering a thorough critique of its weaknesses.

Our journey will traverse the murky waters of RCV's application and its potential ramifications for our democracy. Given the ease with which information can be twisted, it's imperative to rigorously evaluate RCV's purported advantages.

We begin by tracing the historical backdrop of this voting system, from its inception to the unforeseen challenges met by adopters. We'll dive deep, scrutinizing the multifaceted issues that have surfaced.

While RCV is hailed as empowering for voters, We argue it adds layers of complexity, leading to confusion. Our exploration will reveal potential pitfalls, risking disenfranchisement for even the most earnest voters.

Furthermore, the colossal expenses and extensive campaigns required to familiarize voters with RCV are often understated, masking the real burdens it imposes on taxpayers and the electorate.

Our investigation into RCV's real-world applications will spotlight instances where democracy seems jeopardized. RCV's promise of establishing majority rule is undermined by risks of covert alliances and tactical voting, potentially muffling the people's voice.

Beyond its tangible flaws, RCV poses philosophical quandaries challenging our democratic tenets. Does it truly

champion fair representation and informed choices, or does it merely facilitate opportunistic political maneuvering?

In our quest for clarity, it's paramount to avoid biases and remain impartial, evaluating RCV holistically. Let's challenge ourselves to scrutinize every facet, acknowledging that each reform has its pros and cons.

Navigating this exploration, let's remain open-minded and discerning, ready to question mainstream narratives about RCV. Together, we'll unveil the often-obscured intricacies, striving for a deeper comprehension of this system's real impact on our cherished democratic principles.

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(3) StopRCV. Home page. StopRCV. https://stoprcv.com/

Chapter 1:

What is Rank Choice Voting? & History

Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV) is a voting system that allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference on the ballot. It has garnered significant interest in recent years and has been adopted by various countries, each with its distinct version of the system. Early adopters of RCV, such as Australia and Ireland, utilize variations known as the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system.

In the United States, Maine became the first state to use RCV in federal elections, starting with the congressional election in 2018. It expanded to include the first-ever ranked-choice presidential primary in 2020. The RCV system used in Maine is an example of Instant-Runoff Voting (IRV). Voters can rank as many candidates as they want, and if a candidate receives more than 50% of first-place votes, they win. If no candidate secures a majority, a

vote reallocation (often termed 'exhausted') process takes place. The candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and their supporters' votes are redistributed to their second choice.

RCV presents some practical challenges. Its implementation might confuse certain voters, resulting in a significant number of spoiled or incorrectly filled ballots. Insufficient understanding and implementation of RCV can undermine its effectiveness and discourage policymakers from supporting such reform efforts. Additionally, little empirical evidence exists regarding the financial impact of RCV on election budgets, leaving election administrators ill-equipped to effectively implement this reform.

This book endeavors to delve into and offer insights on the implementation and financial repercussions of RCV. By analyzing election cost data from municipalities that have adopted RCV within the past 20 years, we seek to uncover the monetary costs and benefits associated with this voting system. Through this, we aspire to enhance the comprehension of RCV's implications and potential, advancing the quest for more democratic electoral systems.

Alaska Experience: An Analogy for Ranked Choice Voting

In the US House Election in 2022, Alaska encountered an intriguing scenario. Although the majority of the state

voted for a Republican candidate, a Democrat took office. To provide some context, it's akin to not receiving one's preferred flavor of ice cream. While pistachio ice cream might not be undesirable, most people wouldn't select it as their top choice. This analogy sheds light on the principle of Ranked Choice Voting and how it can yield results that don't necessarily reflect the majority's preferences.

Why did Alaskans vote for Ranked Choice Voting in 2020?

What were the reasons behind Alaskans' support for Ranked Choice Voting in 2020? We'll begin by examining the wording of the original Ranked Choice Voting Citizen's Initiative, which received significant funding from out-of-state sources. Before gaining approval from the Supreme Court after their original ballot initative was declined by the State of Alaska for violating the “One Subject” Rule regarding ballot intiatives Typically, a citizen's initiative is restricted to one subject to guarantee concise and clear wording that adheres to the maximum character limit.

The ballot measure strongly highlighted issues of dark money and campaign finance reform, adding to the confusion and frustration linked to Ranked Choice Voting. We derived these insights from numerous discussions with poll watchers, volunteers, and voters who voiced their bewilderment regarding the ballot question and the voting procedure.

In subsequent chapters, we will delve deeper into the nuances of Ranked Choice Voting, analyzing its ramifications and influence on election results. By comprehending the Alaska scenario and positioning it within the larger conversation.

History of Rank Choice Voting

Ranked Choice Voting has been attempted 85 times since the progressive era of our country. As Winston Churchill wisely stated in 1948, "Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it." People, businesses, and governments are all prone to making mistakes. Recognizing these errors and rectifying them can be a time-consuming process. However, when the issues are widely recognized and documented, turning a blind eye is not a viable option.

It's crucial to take lessons from past implementations and challenges of Ranked Choice Voting to ensure that the system's benefits are realized without inadvertently introducing new issues. Historical retrospection allows us to see patterns, benefits, and pitfalls, and equips us to make more informed decisions about its adoption and application in the present day. Ignoring the potential pitfalls, especially when they are well-documented, runs the risk of undermining the integrity and effectiveness of the electoral process. Therefore, a holistic understanding of its historical context is imperative for a balanced perspective on its future applications.

"The Case Against Ranked Choice Voting" by Jason Snead & Trent England

In Jason and Trent's book "The Case Against Ranked Choice Voting they give a great overview of the history of RCV, we do encourage readers of this book to also read their book. They are subject matter experts on election integrity issues plaguing our country and I feel it is important to give credit to some great minds in elections. They travel regularly to do presentations and setup election intregrity events all over the country. I have personally seen both of them do many presentations and I believe they are working hard for all Americans to make it "Easy To Vote, and Hard to Cheat" as Jason Snead regularly says. Their book is referenced in the bibliography as well.

"More Parties, No Parties"

Here is a summary of the key points from the Book:

- The book examines electoral reform politics in the United States, specifically the push for single transferable vote (STV) proportional representation in the early 20th century.

- STV advocates target two constituencies: those who want proportional party representation in legislatures, and those who want candidates to seek votes across party lines ("weak partisanship"). These goals conflict.

- In practice, STV systems around the world tend to enable proportionality but hinder cross-party voting.

- Many current STV proposals would not let parties nominate slates, instead using nonpartisan primaries. This aims to prevent parties controlling nominations but makes party organization difficult.

- The book argues reform happens when coalitions shift, often during realignment periods when new parties gain support. Incumbents rarely reform but outsider groups can build reform coalitions.

- The history focuses on STV adoption in 24 U.S. cities c.1915-45, then repeal in all but one. Reformers used cities as demonstration sites but needed PR at higher levels.

- The legacy includes nonpartisan ballots, at-large elections, and small city councils, which trace to the old reform movement.

Here is an updated summary including those details:

- The book argues reformers were promoting STV in the first place because crucial allies opposed political parties in general. Among them were proponents of other ranked-ballot systems adopted in at least 61 places from 1905-25.

- Working with this anti-party group helped get STV passed initially. But the reforms were not stable, and reformers found they needed parties after all.

- Several legacies of the old movement still shape American politics today: nonpartisan ballots, small city councils elected at-large under "winner-take-all" rules, and winners who often come from a "good government" slate.

- Many such features appeared in cities that never tried STV, and came to be seen as voter suppression devices. The old reform movement helped spread them, even to places that did not directly adopt STV.

Australia, Ireland, Canada – STV / RCV how the system is gamed

Understanding that Australia has used STV / RCV for nearly 100 years. We need to understand a couple differences between these countries and more diverse countries like the United States. A couple big differences between Australia, Ireland, Canada, and the United States.

Australia:

Australia has used the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system for over a century. STV was introduced in Australia in the early 20th century as a means to elect members to the Senate, the upper house of the Australian Parliament. The first federal election in which STV was used was in 1919.

Since then, STV has been the primary voting system for electing senators in Australia.

In addition to the federal level, several Australian states also use the STV system for various parliamentary and local government elections. Some states have been using STV for their upper houses, while others use it for local council elections or other legislative bodies.

The STV system is known for its proportional representation and preference voting, which allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference. It provides a way for voters to have more say in the election outcome and allows for a diversity of candidates and parties to be represented in parliament. Over the years, STV has become an integral part of Australia's electoral process and has been widely accepted as a fair and effective voting system in the country.(2)

Ireland:

Almost every election held on the island of Ireland uses the Single Transferable Vote (STV), also known as Ranked Choice Voting. Except for the elections for the 18 Westminster seats from Northern Ireland, every other election, on both sides of the border, uses this system. The Republic of Ireland has employed STV successfully for over a century. But what prompted Ireland to abandon First Past the Post?

The final UK general election in Ireland to utilize First Past the Post was conducted in 1918. This was the first opportunity in eight years for the Irish populace to express their electoral voice because of the First World War. The outcome signaled a pivotal shift in Irish politics, marked by the decline of the Irish Parliamentary Party, which had been the primary political force since the 1880s, and the rise of Sinn Féin.

With First Past the Post, Sinn Fein secured a significant victory – capturing 73 out of 105 seats (69.5%) with just 47% of the total votes. At that period, the 'question of Ireland' was a hot topic, and no UK prime minister desired to be responsible for 'losing' Ireland. To counter the burgeoning independence movement, the government enacted the 1919 Local Government Act of Ireland. Given the advantages First Past the Post conferred upon Sinn Fein, this act approved the utilization of proportional representation, specifically STV, in local elections. With STV, larger wards would elect a group of representatives, leading to results that more accurately reflected the voters' preferences.

The act aimed to curb Sinn Fein's disproportionate seat acquisition. However, rather than resisting, Sinn Fein embraced this development, aligning it with their broader mission of empowering the Irish people. Notably, Arthur Griffith, the founder of Sinn Féin, had earlier lauded the

establishment of the Proportional Representation Society of Ireland in 1911.

STV was first put to the test at a local level during the 1919 Sligo by-election. The Irish Times heralded its success, describing it as a "thoroughly workable system" and the "Magna Carta of political and municipal minorities". In 1920, STV was used for local polls and incorporated into the Government of Ireland Act. While the House of Commons of Southern Ireland soon became obsolete due to events in the War of Independence, STV's relevance in Irish politics was growing.

Following its independence, the Irish Free State implemented STV for its 1922 elections. This system was subsequently embedded in the Irish Constitution through a public referendum on 1 July 1937. Whenever challenges arose against STV, they were defeated. For instance, two referendums, one in 1959 and another in 1968, proposed reverting to the FPTP system. Both proposals were defeated by the Irish public, with the latter being rejected by a decisive 61% to 39%. This experience in the Republic of Ireland resonates globally – once people acclimatize to a proportional electoral system, there's limited inclination to revert to First Past the Post.

The Irish Free State, which later evolved into the Republic of Ireland, introduced STV for its inaugural parliamentary

elections in 1922. This method aimed at achieving proportional representation and facilitating fair, democratic elections. STV permits voters to rank candidates sequentially, allocating seats through a quota mechanism. Candidates reaching the required vote quota are elected, and any excess votes they acquire are shifted to those ballots' subsequent preferences. If no candidate meets the quota, the lowest-ranking candidate is excluded, and their votes are reallocated to the next preferences. This cycle continues until all positions are occupied. STV's implementation in Ireland is widely perceived as a success, fostering a diverse political landscape and granting voters a significant role in the electoral procedure. It has played a key role in cultivating a multi-party system in Ireland, solidifying its place in the nation's democratic heritage.(3)

Canada:

Canada uses a first-past-the-post (FPTP) system for its parliamentary elections, wherein the candidate securing the most votes in an electoral district wins, irrespective of achieving an absolute majority. Notably, some provinces and territories, including British Columbia (BC), have adopted variants of the ranked choice voting (RCV) system for specific local elections. BC, for instance, has used the Single Transferable Vote (STV) method for provincial elections, though it was subsequently repealed following a 2009 referendum.

In the 2009 BC elections, the populace was presented with a choice to revolutionize their electoral system via the BC-STV proposal. This system would restructure BC into fewer, larger ridings, each having multiple representatives. Voters would rank their preferred candidates on more extensive ballots. A successful transition to this system needed a 60% approval rate. Given that the 2005 referendum nearly achieved this threshold at 57.69%, the government reintroduced the proposal in 2009. Under the current system, BC's 85 ridings allow the candidate with the most votes to represent that region in government. In contrast, BC-STV would permit voters to rank multiple candidates across parties or support an independent. Instead of one Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) representing a particular riding, the BC-STV system would designate multiple MLAs for broader districts. For instance, the Kootenays would be represented by the top four vote-receiving candidates, irrespective of party affiliations.

The motivation behind the BC-STV system was a unanimous decision by the B.C. legislature in 2004 to form a Citizen's Assembly to explore voting reforms. After extensive research and public consultations, the assembly recommended the STV system. In the 2005 referendum, while BC-STV secured 58% support, it fell short of the required 60%. As a result, the question was posed again in the May 2009 elections. Advocates for the BC-STV system argue it ensures a higher percentage of voters have a

representative they voted for in the legislature. Opponents, however, view it as convoluted, with concerns about diluting accountability in larger ridings. Ultimately, in the 2009 referendum, 39.09% supported the BC-STV, while 60.91% favored retaining the FPTP system.(4)

United States:

The United States first used instant runoff voting (IRV), also known as ranked choice voting (RCV), in certain local elections. The implementation of IRV in the U.S. began in the early 21st century.

One notable example of early IRV usage was in San Francisco, California. San Francisco adopted IRV for its municipal elections in 2004, becoming one of the first major cities in the United States to use this voting system. IRV was used in San Francisco's mayoral elections and some other local contests.(5)

Since then, several other cities across the United States have adopted or experimented with ranked choice voting for various local elections. Additionally, some states have considered implementing IRV for statewide elections, but the adoption of new voting methods at the state level can be more complex and may require changes to state constitutions or laws.

Advocates for Rank Choice Voting push the idea of RCV on people without addressing the potential issues that RCV

could cause. We use an analogy of a medicine bottle. When you get prescribed medication, there is a label on the side of the bottle that lists the potential side effects of the medication. You are also warned about potential combinations that may be harmful, or even deadly. The more research we do into RCV, the more we recognize the sheer arrogance and ignorance the Pro-RCV groups show towards the common man. They don't want to tell you what the potential issues are, because if they do, you won't vote for it.

It is important for medication bottles to have a warning label. Medication is a personal decision and it mostly impacts one person or a family. Completely modifying an election system is very drastic and it impacts large groups of people, various demographic groups are impacted disproportionately. The Pro-RCV groups and funders after I brought these points up to them, they claim that it will get better over time. They do acknowledge that RCV has issues if you really press them and ask specific questions.

Does It Get Better Over Time?

From the research we have done, spanning over two decades, we have found that the issues we bring up in this book seem to be very common issues that are associated with Rank Choice Voting.

1. Ballot Confusion

2. Ballot Complexity
3. Exhausted Ballots
4. Confused Voters
5. Long Ballots
6. Extended Delays Getting Results
7. Various Demographics Have Higher Error Rates Using RCV
8. Various Demographics Have More Exhausted Ballots Than Others

Looking at the potential issues with Rank Choice Voting. We have to understand the system is not new. It has been in use in Australia for over 100 years. It has been used in San Francisco since 2004. Our research has shown that many of the places that have used Rank Choice Voting, have abandoned the system and have gone back to the easily understood plurality voting system.

Our research has shown the same ballot issues that we address in San Francisco in 2011, show up in Oakland in 2022. Unfortunately for most of the results we have seen. They bury Error Rates and even how various demographics fill out their ballots. They also do not breakdown the exhausted ballots category, which should contain many clues to how bad RCV really is. One of the key pieces to pay close attention to is how many people are only filling out their candidate selections by choosing 1 candidate per race. This

statistic is important to know how many people are potentially filing out their ballots incorrectly.

Many older voters may also vote like a survey if given the opportunity to select multiple candidates. For example, imagine your grandmother giving you and your cousin a ranking. She may rank you both with the same scores. If our elderly can make these two very simple mistakes, there are most likely many other demographic groups that could be impacted. (6)

Other groups that could be impacted

English as a second language

Low Information Voters

Low Education Voters

First Time Voters

New Citizens

The arrogance and ignorance of Pro-RCV groups again plays out when we discuss these various demographics groups. I have heard Pro-RCV groups claim that I need "Teach Our Grandparents and Parents how to Use RCV" also claiming that people who do not understand Rank Choice Voting are "stupid."

Ranked Choice Software, Where Does It Come From and Who Makes It?

In the 2023 Election is Arlington, Virginia. The software and hardware used were not compatiable with have updwards of 6 candidates. The Rank Choice Voting software used came from a Pro-RCV group known as the Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center. This software does not need to be certified since it is exclusively a Ranked Choice Voting tabulator. How are we as voters supposed to trust election outcomes when the very software the election office may use, is not certified, and is provided by Pro-RCV groups?

In Oakland in 2022, the original winner was declared. Another Out of State Pro-RCV group known as FairVote wanted a particular candidate to win. They reached out to the election office and told them that the election office used the wrong settings on the tabulation software. The election office took the advice from FairVote, FairVote's candidate did not initially win. After reaching out to the election office, the candidate they wanted to win. Did. Who made the Ranked Choice Voting software for Oakland? What company made it? Is it certified? If FairVote's candidate won in the first place, would they have reached out to Oakland's election office to let them know about the software settings, or was this primiarily because the candidate they supported lost? (6)

Arrogance, Ignorance, Elitist Mentality, Software that is not 3rd party certified

Our elections can not be ran by software that is provided by potentially biased sources. We need to make sure any software that is used for any election needs to have a 3rd party certification proving that the software works. Let's use the Ocean Gate Titan Sub for a great example and analogy for. If Ocean Gate Titan Sub was certified by a 3rd party source, the likelihood that they Sub would have failed the way it did, is unlikely. The goal of this book is to make sure you are aware of how your election can end up like the Ocean Gate Titan if you allow experimental systems to take over and software that is not certified for accuracy. When our elections are no longer certified or understandable, more and more voters will stop showing up at the polls.

Alaskans had 4 elections in 2022, the first time using an Jungle Primary and Ranked Choice Voting, they had a special primary, a special general, a regular primary, and a regular general. U.S. Representative Don Young passed away in 2022 after 50 years of service to Alaska. Due to Ballot Measure 2 and the election changes that Ranked Choice Voting was also apart of, included the Jungle Primary, Campaign Finance changes, and also how representatives that die or need to be replaced, are no longer appointed by the Governor. They had to win a special election, which was postponed by months, so Alaskans were not represented by

their U.S. Congressional Representative for multiple months.

Due to the complexity of Ranked Choice Voting, it was determined that the Division of Elections Violated State Law by removing U.S. House Candidate Al Gross from the ballot. He had dropped out after the deadline, if Al Gross were on the ballot as the Alaska Supreme Court claimed he should have, then Mary Peltola would have most likely been eliminated in the first round of voting. The Division of Elections didn't even understand Rank Choice Voting and how the rules worked. This also leaves open the possibility that the Division of Elections, specifically someone within the Division of Elections knew exactly what they were doing when they removed Al Gross from the U.S. Congressional ballot. Either option are not good for Alaska or America. The Division of Elections should not be put in the power to make decisions like this. (7)

The Division of Elections was not the only one who was confused on the rules about Ranked Choice Voting. Earlier we addressed that if an election system is confusing or not understandable then people will not show up. After multiple times using RCV in 2022, Alaskans decided to not show up to Vote. Alaska had the lowest voter turnout in history in 2022, we believe that the implementation of RCV and the Jungle Primary is directly correlated to the Lowest Voter Turnout in Alaska State History. So, not only was the

Division of Elections confused by RCV, so were the voters. We have met thousands of Alaskans from all around the State and we have met a literal handful that still openly support Rank Choice Voting.

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Chapter 2:

Who Funds RCV?

Who funds the RCV initiatives across the country-Funding for ranked choice voting (RCV) initiatives across the United States comes from various sources, including nonprofit organizations, advocacy groups, individual donors, and in some cases, government funding. Here are some key stakeholders and organizations involved in funding RCV efforts:

1. Nonprofit Organizations: Several nonprofit organizations support and advocate for ranked choice voting. Examples include FairVote, The Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center, RepresentUs, and FairVote Action. These organizations work to promote RCV, provide educational resources, and may offer financial support for RCV campaigns.(1)

2. Grassroots Donors: RCV campaigns often receive financial contributions from individual donors who

believe in the principles and benefits of ranked choice voting. These donors can contribute to local, state, or national campaigns and initiatives.

3. Ballot Measure Campaigns: When ranked choice voting is introduced as a ballot measure, funding for the campaign typically comes from a combination of grassroots fundraising, organizational support, and individual donations. These campaigns aim to raise awareness, educate voters, and build support for RCV.

FairVote

Founded in 1992 in Cincinnati, Ohio as Citizens for Proportional Representation, FairVote emerged from a coalition of scholars, activists, government bureaucrats, and ex-elected officials committed to advancing ranked-choice voting (RCV) and proportional representation in local elections. By 1993, the organization, under the leadership of former U.S. Representative John B. Anderson as its executive director, moved to Washington, D.C., adopting the name Center for Voting and Democracy and subsequently rebranding as FairVote in 2004. Championing proportional representation, FairVote's advocacy centers around allocating legislative seats based on popular vote counts. They have ardently promoted RCV, a system where candidates are ranked by voters, and if no candidate achieves a majority, the one with the least votes is excluded,

reallocating their votes. Their efforts have seen RCV being adopted in areas like San Francisco, Minneapolis, Arkansas, South Carolina, and Maine. Additionally, FairVote has played a pivotal role in the National Popular Vote (NPV) initiative, which proposes electing U.S. presidents based on the national popular vote instead of the Electoral College—a notion Maryland was the first to embrace. Collaborating with Stanford's Democracy Fund and other academic entities, FairVote aids in deciphering and deploying RCV, especially in Congressional elections. Their "Reform 2020" campaign spotlights objectives such as Fair Representation Voting, the Constitutional Right to Vote, RCV, and the National Popular Vote, with a key emphasis on lobbying for the Fair Representation Act (H.R. 3057). This act suggests multi-member districts combined with RCV for House elections, aligning with FairVote's stance against the Electoral College. Rob Richie, the organization's President & CEO, has been a part of FairVote since its inception. Notably, the entity garners substantial backing from left-leaning private grantmaking foundations and public charities, including noteworthy names like the Laura and John Arnold Foundation, Omidyar Network Fund, Open Society Foundations, Democracy Fund, and more. (1)

RepresentUS

Established in 2012, RepresentUs identifies itself as a "nonpartisan" organization, striving to mitigate the adverse impacts of campaign financing in U.S. politics, grounded in

the belief that monetary influence fosters corruption. Their core political activism orbits around championing the "American Anti-Corruption Act." This legislation encompasses measures to intensify campaign donation constraints, institute a government-backed subsidy mechanism for political campaigns, and oversee the fundraising periods for Congress members.

In the 2016 ballot measure campaigns, RepresentUs bolstered sixteen distinct initiatives spanning eight states. Notable triumphs from these endeavors comprised reforms in campaign finance, modifications in lobbying laws, enhanced lobbying limitations, and a call to modify the U.S. Constitution. Fast forward to 2018, the South Dakota segment of RepresentUs threw its weight behind Amendment W, which sought to curtail campaign contributions, prohibit gifts from lobbyists, and introduce an ethics commission. Concurrently, in Maine, RepresentUs backed a victorious veto referendum designed to retract specific sections of a law that paused the rollout of a ranked-choice voting system.

As the COVID-19 pandemic gripped the nation, RepresentUs took to the digital space, releasing a video titled "America Needs to Vote at Home," advocating for the Vote by Mail legislation. This proposal was centered on empowering citizens to cast their votes from home, broaden

the reach of absentee ballots, and facilitate early in-person voting during crises.

The organization's celebrity activism is also notable. They boast a "creative council," graced by the presence of Hollywood luminaries such as Jennifer Lawrence, Kerry Washington, and Rachel McAdams. Interestingly, many of these celebrities have historically made donations to Democratic political campaigns.

On the funding front, RepresentUs garners monetary backing from predominantly left-leaning entities, with benefactors like the Atlantic Foundation, Tides Foundation, and Park Foundation, among others.

Delving into the organization's genesis and personnel, RepresentUs was the brainchild of co-founders Josh Silver and Josh Graham Lynn. Their board, an eclectic mix of professionals from sectors like business, technology, and entertainment, is particularly intriguing. Some of these board members have paradoxically engaged in substantial political funding, even as RepresentUs remains vocally critical of such practices. (2)

Unite America

Unite America (UA) is a Denver-based political entity advocating for electoral reforms and supporting moderate-left candidates. Adopting a unique approach, UA functions

as a hybrid political action committee, blending the roles of both a Super PAC and a traditional PAC.

Diving into its financial metrics:

- In 2019, UA's PAC amassed contributions totaling $5,138,040. Spearheading this list of donors was Kathryn Murdoch, an integral board member of UA, who channeled a whopping $3,807,000. Other notable contributors encompass Marc Merrill, co-creator of Riot Games, and the entrepreneurial mind behind Au Bon Pain and Panera Bread, Ron Shaich.

Historical Context:

- UA's inception can be traced back to 2013 when it was conceptualized as 'The Centrist Project' by Charles Wheelan, an academic in economics.

- In its embryonic phase, UA's mission was centered on championing independent political candidates, fostering a movement that gravitated towards candidates not tethered to major political factions.

- Fast forward to 2018, UA threw its weight behind independent contenders for state legislative positions. However, this endeavor was marred by allegations of violating election laws, with none of the quintet of Colorado aspirants, endorsed by UA, emerging victorious.

Activity Spectrum:

- A significant portion of UA's efforts is dedicated to researching the challenges faced in the election of independent candidates. Their advocacy initiatives emphasize "democracy reforms," spotlighting ranked-choice voting, jungle primary selections, and overhauls in the redistricting blueprint.

- Pivoting to a novel strategy, UA now channels its resources towards organizations with left-of-center ideologies, committed to electoral reforms. This includes groups like Alaskans for Better Elections and Pennsylvanians Against Gerrymandering.

Luminaries and Benefactors:

- Charles Wheelan, the architect of UA, has a history of backing ten Democratic Party contenders for federal roles spanning 2003-2019.

- Kathryn Murdoch, not only stands as UA's paramount contributor but also resonates with left-of-center ideologies and has a penchant for supporting Democratic Party candidates.

- Shawn Riegsecker, donning the co-chair hat for UA's board, is known for his monetary support to Democratic Party candidates and critiques of President Trump and the Republican Party.

- Additional board members comprise Jeff Binder, a contributor of $50,000 in 2019, Katherine Gehl, an advocate against "excessive partisanship," and Linda Killian, who often critiques President Trump in her compositions.

- The board also features names like Marc Merrill, who, despite his contributions, has faced allegations concerning gender discrimination at Riot Games, Greg Orman, who leaned on Democratic Party-aligned PACs for funding during his gubernatorial run in Kansas, Lisa D. T. Rice, a representative in corporate and nonprofit public affairs, and Neal Simon, a one-time CEO and Maryland's independent Senate candidate in 2018.(3)

Katherine Gehl

Katherine M. Gehl stands as the visionary behind The Institute for Political Innovation (IPI), an impartial nonprofit that came into existence in 2020 with the ambition to instigate contemporary political evolution in the United States.

Delving deep into the academic realm, Katherine pioneered the Politics Industry Theory and penned "The Politics Industry: How Political Innovation Can Break Partisan Gridlock and Save Our Democracy." This intellectual work saw her collaborating with Michael E. Porter, a luminary from the Harvard Business School.

Katherine's multifaceted career trajectory has seen her navigate the corridors of both the public and private domains. In the corporate landscape, she helmed Gehl Foods as its president and CEO. This Wisconsin-based entity, boasting a valuation of $250-million, specializes in high-tech food production. Katherine's leadership culminated in 2015 when she orchestrated the company's sale. (4)

Switching gears to her public service endeavors, Katherine was a pivotal member of the Board of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC). This institution functions as the U.S. government's conduit for development finance.

Extending her influence further, Katherine occupies esteemed positions on a plethora of nonprofit boards, with entities like Unite America, New America, and Business for America benefiting from her expertise. Her philanthropic inclinations are evident in her generous contributions to various causes.

Moreover, Katherine's commitment to political transformation is underscored by her role as the honorary co-chair of the National Association of Nonpartisan Reformers. Additionally, she is recognized as one of the founding pillars of Democracy Found.(5)

Institute for Political Innovation

The Institute for Political Innovation (IPI) emerges as a nonprofit institution dedicated to pioneering transformative shifts within the American political landscape.

One of the pressing concerns IPI addresses is the prevailing "toxic levels of unhealthy competition" that plagues the political arena. This situation emanates from citizens' dissatisfaction with their voting options and the apparent lack of motivation among politicians to genuinely address issues.

Standing at the helm of IPI is Katherine Gehl. Apart from her distinguished role here, she has an impressive corporate legacy as the erstwhile president and CEO of Gehl Foods. She eventually parted ways with the food production giant in 2015 by facilitating its sale.

Key Initiatives:

- IPI envisions a comprehensive overhaul of the U.S. electoral and legislative procedures, channeling its efforts into two major campaigns: Final-Five Voting and Zero-Based Rule Making.

- Final-Five Voting is an innovative approach that proposes a shift from party-centric primary elections to a more inclusive universal ballot system. Here, the electorate would employ ranked choice voting, designating their preferences

among candidates. This method would culminate in a final general election ballot, showcasing a selection of five prominent candidates.

- Zero-Based Rule Making adopts a ground-up methodology for the legislative framework across municipal, state, and national tiers. The strategy is to purge archaic rules, initiating every fiscal period from scratch or "zero." The allocation of budgetary resources would then be rooted in a meticulous assessment of requirements and fiscal outlays. To oversee this transformative process, the Legislative Machinery Innovation Commission, an autonomous and impartial body, would be instated.

Leadership Insights:

- Katherine Gehl's influential position as the architect and chairperson of IPI is complemented by her academic endeavors. She collaborated with the esteemed Michael E. Porter from the Harvard Business School to craft "The Politics Industry." This seminal work encapsulates a myriad of concepts and recommendations championed by IPI.

- Katherine's professional journey, marked by her tenure at Gehl Foods and its subsequent sale, segued into a passionate pursuit of political advocacy.

- Her commitment extends beyond IPI. Katherine holds prestigious positions on the directorial boards of United America, Business for America, and New America. Her

dedication to nonpartisan reforms is evident in her role as the honorary co-chair of the National Association of Nonpartisan Reformers (NANR). Furthermore, she is a pivotal force behind Democracy Found, a movement endorsing the adoption of Final-Five Voting in Wisconsin.(6)

Veterans For Political Innovation

Veterans for All Voters, previously known as Veterans for Political Innovation (VPI), stands out as a prominent electoral administration advocacy group established by military veterans. This group champions the "Final-Five Voting" system, a comprehensive suite of election procedure modifications that encompasses open primaries, ranked-choice voting, and a myriad of alternatives to the traditional plurality voting mechanism. Its advocacy extends across various state-level chapters in the U.S., with Missouri, Nevada, and Wisconsin being identified as the most active hubs.

Interestingly, the name shift from Veterans for Political Innovation (VPI) to Veterans for All Voters in October 2023 was positioned as a strategic move to forge alliances and build associated state chapters. The funding for this organization is intriguing, with significant contributions flowing in from the Institute for Political Innovation (IPI) and the Dr. Bronner's Family Foundation, which originates from the Dr. Bronner's Magic Soap company's vast wealth.

Now, delving into the Institute for Political Innovation (IPI), it emerges as a catalyst for revolutionary changes in the American political domain, with its founding torch held by Katherine Gehl, the former powerhouse behind Gehl Foods. The institute's vision is rooted in restructuring the U.S. electoral and legislative systems, with its primary campaigns being Final-Five Voting and Zero-Based Rule Making.

One cannot help but notice the uncanny resonance between the modus operandi of both these organizations. The recent renaming of Veterans for All Voters appears to be a deliberate distancing act from the Institute for Political Innovation, perhaps to lend an air of autonomy and grassroots authenticity to its operations. This tactic seems reminiscent of a wider strategy employed by the IPI under Gehl's leadership. They ingeniously design grassroots subsidiaries that promote ranked-choice voting not just at the state and city levels, but further drilling down to local governments and even educational institutions.

Both the entities, in their distinctive capacities, are amplifying their outreach, shaping the narrative, and influencing electoral reform policies. While the name changes and grassroots tactics may present an image of decentralized and independent advocacy, the interconnected funding channels and shared goals hint at a

more coordinated and strategic approach to revolutionizing America's electoral landscape for the good or bad.(7)

Ranked Choice Resource Center (RCVRC)

The Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center (RCVRC) is a North Carolina-based advocacy organization that champions the adoption of ranked-choice voting systems across the U.S. It operates as a project under the umbrella of the Election Administration Resource Center (EARC), a North Carolina-based nonprofit.

Activities:

In June 2023, the Virginia Department of Elections (ELECT) and the Virginia State Board of Elections partnered with RCVRC to create ranked choice voting (RCV) software for forthcoming state elections, even with a Republican majority in both entities. Earlier, in January 2023, ELECT acquired the Universal RCV Tabulator (RCTab), an RCV software devised by RCVRC, to effectively administer elections determined by RCV.

Financials:

RCVRC commenced its operations in 2019, thanks to an $850,000 donation from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Sheldon Kaphan Foundation. They received another generous donation of $1 million from The Hewlett Foundation in 2022. Arnold Ventures further bolstered their financial strength with a $500,000 grant.

Other notable contributors include the Super PAC Unite America, with a $250,000 grant in 2021 from the Unite America Institute. Moreover, the Center for Civic Design recognizes RCVRC as a collaborator in election policy matters.

Leadership:

Rosemary F. Blizzard assumed the role of executive director for RCVRC in March 2023, succeeding its founder, Gary Bartlett. Before her stint at RCVRC, Blizzard directed the election activities for Wayne County, North Carolina, and held positions such as Voting Registration Director and District Elections Technician for the North Carolina State Board of Elections between 2004 and 2011.

Gary Bartlett, the brainchild behind RCVRC, served as its executive director until March 2023 when Blizzard took over. His leadership experience includes a 20-year term as the executive director for the North Carolina Board of Elections (1993-2013). As of 2023, Bartlett offers his expertise as an independent consultant for various bodies, including the non-profit organization FairVote.(8)

Election Administration Resource Center (EARC)

The Election Administration Resource Center (EARC) operates within the realm of electoral policy, anchoring its efforts in the administration and dissemination of information related to voting systems. A key initiative under EARC's purview is the Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center

(RCVRC). This digital hub facilitates the in-depth exploration and distribution of data concerning the ranked-choice voting mechanisms implemented across various states.(9)

Alaskan Experience

Alaskans traditionally value their independence and have a strong sense of pride in their state. With a rich history of entrepreneurship and a deep connection to their natural resources, Alaskans support their local businesses and take pride in making decisions that shape the future of their state. Consequently, they are often wary of outside influence on their elections.

Former Alaska Gov. Sean Parnell (R) and former Alaska Sen. Mark Begich (D) expressed concerns about ranked-choice voting in an op-ed, noting that they believe it would harm Alaska's elections. As former elected officials from different parties, they share a united belief that the Better Elections initiative would be detrimental to the state, emphasizing the importance of ensuring that Alaskans have confidence in the integrity of their votes.(10)

In the context of Alaska, it is noteworthy that a significant portion of funding for ranked-choice voting initiatives came from out-of-state sources, which raises concerns about the influence of external forces on the electoral process. The limited support from within Alaska, with just $20,000 in local donations, reflects the desire of Alaskans to maintain

control over their state's elections and avoid undue outside influence.(11)

99% of the money used to bring ranked choice voting came from out of state sources

The fundraising numbers highlight a significant discrepancy. The Yes on 2 for Better Elections campaign has raised a substantial $6,194,081 from outside of Alaska but has only collected $20,000 from within the state.(12)

(1) InfluenceWatch. FairVote. InfluenceWatch. https://www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/fairvote/

(2) InfluenceWatch. RepresentUs. InfluenceWatch. https://www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/representus/

(3) InfluenceWatch. Unite America. InfluenceWatch. https://www.influencewatch.org/political-party/unite-america/

(4) Gehl, K. (Year of Publication). Title of the webpage. Institute for Political Innovation. https://political-innovation.org/staff/katherine-gehl/

(5) InfluenceWatch. Democracy Found. InfluenceWatch.

https://www.influencewatch.org/organization/democracy-found/

(6) InfluenceWatch. Institute for Political Innovation. InfluenceWatch. https://www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/institute-for-political-innovation-ipi/

(7) InfluenceWatch. Veterans for Political Innovation. InfluenceWatch. https://www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/veterans-for-all-voters/

(8) InfluenceWatch. RCVRC . InfluenceWatch. https://www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/ranked-choice-voting-resource-center-rcvrc/

(9) InfluenceWatch. EARC. InfluenceWatch. https://www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/election-administration-resource-center-earc/

(10) What they're saying. Protect My Ballot. https://protectmyballot.com/#whattheyresaying

(11) Moran, S. (2020). Out-of-State Billionaires Funding Ranked Choice Voting Campaign in Alaska. Breitbart. https://www.breitbart.com/politics/2020/10/25/ou

t-state-billionaires-funding-ranked-choice-voting-campaign-alaska/

(12) Fleetwood, S. (2023). After Ranked-Choice Voting Rigged Their Elections, Alaska Conservatives Fight To Reclaim Democracy. The Federalist. https://thefederalist.com/2023/02/14/after-ranked-choice-voting-rigged-their-elections-alaska-conservatives-fight-to-reclaim-democracy/

Chapter 3:

How they claim it should work.

Ranked-choice voting (RCV), also known as instant-runoff voting, is a voting system that aims to provide a more inclusive and representative electoral process. It allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference on their ballots, rather than just selecting a single candidate. The process typically involves several steps.

Ranked choice voting claims to be better, faster, cheaper, it claims to increase turnout, and it claims to be more civil according to RCV advocates like Law Professor Richard Pildes. However, in our exploration of ranked choice voting and meeting thousands of people across the country, including thousands in Alaska in 2023, we found that most people do not understand RCV.

The author decided to get involved in educating about ranked choice voting due to his grandfather's experience. His grandfather, a veteran and former business owner in

Alaska who has lived there for 30 years, has voted in every election he can remember. He expressed concerns about RCV and specifically how to fill out his ballot. This real example highlights the need to label experimental election systems like RCV as such and revamp voter education related to RCV. We also need to consider the potential costs associated with educating a large percentage of the population on how to use the ranked choice voting method.

During our travels, we also met young disabled individuals who found RCV, particularly the ballot and how to fill it out, confusing. We encountered many veterans who felt that due to ranked choice voting and the feeling that their ballots "do not count," they would no longer vote. It's important to understand that election science is still evolving, and small sample size data, surveys, hypotheses, and limited tests may not be sufficient to prove that a system like RCV is ready for widespread implementation. We believe that a lot more research and data will be made available over the next couple of years that will help determine if RCV has achieved its objectives.

While ranked-choice voting aims to provide a more accurate representation of voter preferences and prevent outcomes where a candidate wins without majority support, it also has its share of concerns and criticisms. Governors, senators, and other individuals have expressed worries about voter

confusion, potential disenfranchisement, and increased complexity in the electoral process.

These concerns and criticisms, it is important to critically analyze the information presented about ranked-choice voting. By doing so, we can better understand the potential effects of RCV on electoral outcomes and make well-informed decisions about the future of our electoral system.(1)

(1) Foundation for Government Accountability. (n.d.). Ranked choice voting: A disaster in disguise. Foundation for Government Accountability. https://thefga.org/research/ranked-choice-voting-a-disaster-in-disguise/

Chapter 4:

They Claim It Is Better

How is it better?

Ranked choice voting (RCV) offers several advantages that proponents argue make it a better voting system compared to traditional plurality-based systems. Here are some key benefits of ranked choice voting:

1. Majority Winners: RCV ensures that the winning candidate has majority support. By allowing voters to rank candidates in order of preference, RCV considers the full spectrum of voter preferences. It promotes the selection of candidates who can attract broad support, rather than candidates who might win with a narrow plurality but lack majority support.

2. Elimination of Spoiler Effect: RCV eliminates the "spoiler effect" where similar candidates split votes, potentially allowing a less popular candidate to win. With RCV, voters can rank their preferred candidate first without the fear of wasting their vote. If their

first-choice candidate is eliminated, their vote is transferred to the next-ranked candidate, ensuring their voice is still considered.

3. Reduction of Tactical Voting: RCV reduces the incentive for strategic or tactical voting. Voters can express their true preferences without concerns about vote splitting or negative consequences. They can rank candidates based on their genuine preferences, rather than feeling pressured to vote strategically for a perceived frontrunner or against a disliked candidate.

4. Positive Campaigning: RCV encourages candidates to engage in more positive and inclusive campaigning. Since candidates need to appeal to a broader range of voters to secure higher rankings, they have an incentive to build coalitions and reach out to a diverse electorate. This can lead to more issue-based campaigns, reduced negativity, and increased collaboration among candidates.

5. Increased Voter Choice: RCV expands voter choice by allowing voters to support their preferred candidate without fear of "wasting" their vote. Voters can rank candidates beyond the traditional binary choice, empowering them to express their nuanced

preferences and support candidates who align closely with their values.

6. Cost and Time Efficiency: RCV can potentially be cost-effective by eliminating the need for separate runoff elections and reducing negative campaigning. It streamlines the electoral process by determining the majority through ranked preferences, saving time and resources associated with additional elections.

7. Representation and Inclusivity: Proponents argue that RCV promotes more representative outcomes by ensuring that candidates with broader appeal are elected. It can provide a platform for diverse voices, reducing the barriers for candidates from underrepresented communities and encouraging a more inclusive political landscape.

Why it is not Better

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) is criticized for failing to uphold the principle of "One Person, One Vote." This is because RCV allows some voters multiple opportunities to influence the outcome, while others only have one chance. In RCV, second-choice votes only count for those whose first choice has been eliminated. This can lead to an unrepresentative outcome, as demonstrated by the 2009 Mayoral RCV election in Burlington, Vermont, which eventually led to the repeal of the system.

RCV attempts to address the issue of vote-splitting, but it can still occur in any round of the voting process. Additionally, RCV doesn't eliminate the spoiler effect, which allows major parties to discourage support for third-party candidates by propagandizing against them.

RCV also results in higher rates of spoiled ballots compared to traditional Choose-One Voting, particularly among lower-income voters and historically marginalized communities. Errors such as equal rankings, skipped rankings, and double rankings are common. RCV imposes limitations on the number of candidates a voter can rank, potentially preventing them from expressing their true preferences.

Another criticism is the possibility of a false majority. RCV stops tabulation when a candidate is the top choice on a majority of remaining ballots, even if another candidate is preferred on more ballots overall. This means that only a fraction of the rankings are considered, potentially excluding the candidate who is actually more preferred by voters.

RCV also requires centralized counting, leading to logistical challenges. For example, in Maine, where RCV was adopted in 2018, ballots need to be shipped to a central location for additional voting rounds, causing delays in determining the

election outcome. The lack of batch summability makes the process time-consuming and less transparent.

Overall, RCV faces criticism for its potential to undermine the principle of "One Person, One Vote," increase ballot errors, limit voter preferences, and create logistical challenges in the counting process.(1)

(1) Foundation for Government Accountability. (n.d.). Ranked choice voting: A disaster in disguise. Foundation for Government Accountability. https://thefga.org/research/ranked-choice-voting-a-disaster-in-disguise/

Chapter 5:

They Claim It Is Cheaper

Rank Choice Voting (RCV) is often touted as a cost-effective alternative to traditional voting systems, but it is important to examine these claims with a skeptical eye. One supposed advantage is the elimination of costly runoff elections when no candidate obtains a majority in the initial round. RCV aims to determine the majority through a ranking and elimination process, theoretically saving money on separate runoff elections. However, the actual cost savings may not be as significant as proponents suggest.

Another claim is that RCV promotes more positive campaigning and encourages candidates to appeal to a wider voter base, leading to more efficient and cost-effective campaigns. While this may sound promising, it is unclear how consistently this occurs in practice. Negative and divisive strategies are not exclusive to traditional systems, and it remains uncertain whether RCV truly fosters a more positive campaign environment.

It is important to consider the potential drawbacks and challenges associated with implementing RCV, such as voter education and understanding the complex mechanisms of the ranking system, and potential demographics factors correlated with exhausted or spoiled ballots.

The claim that RCV increases voter turnout is not entirely substantiated. While there are some studies suggesting a positive effect on turnout, the evidence is mixed, and it is difficult to isolate the impact of RCV from other factors influencing voter participation, in some cases like Alaska using RCV for the first time, we had the lowest voter turnout in the history of our State. 44.38%.

Lastly, proponents suggest that RCV benefits third-party candidates and can provide them with a more level playing field. While this may seem appealing, it is essential to analyze the real-world implications and potential consequences for third-party representation within the RCV framework. Currently with the evidence from Maine and Alaska. There have been 12 Democrat wins in the Maine State Legislature, 1 US House Seat, Alaska 2 State Senate Seats and 1 US House Seat all using Rank Choice Voting, not including incumbent wins. Very little 3rd party success, in fact outside of 1 race in Alaska, no 3rd party success.

Claims made by RCV advocates regarding its cost-effectiveness should be critically evaluated. It is important to scrutinize the actual outcomes and consider the complexities and potential drawbacks associated with implementing RCV. In many cases expensive voter education is necessary to re-educate the people about how they need to vote. There are many cases we will bring up in this book about how demographics and ballot exhaustion, overvotes, and undervotes, correlate. We believe that one of the key pieces of Rank Choice Voting, also hurts our most vulnerable.

Importance of Voter Education and Cost

1. Burden of Elimination Rounds:

Ranked choice voting (RCV) introduces a convoluted and time-consuming process of elimination rounds, which can burden the ballot counting process. In traditional plurality-based systems, election results are typically determined swiftly after the initial vote. However, RCV requires multiple rounds of tabulation, where ballots are transported to a centralized location, resulting in increased costs and vulnerability to mismanagement. The prolonged tabulation process can lead to delays in declaring the winner, raising concerns of impropriety and undermining voter confidence.

2. Expensive Voter Education and Training:

The implementation of RCV necessitates costly voter education campaigns and training programs, adding a

significant financial burden. Unlike traditional voting systems that children are already familiar with, RCV requires extensive education efforts to teach voters how to rank candidates and understand the complex elimination process. This includes not only educating adult voters but also developing specialized programs for children and non-English speakers who may struggle to comprehend RCV. The expense associated with educating the electorate raises questions about the cost-effectiveness of implementing RCV.

3. Disproportionate Impact on Vulnerable Groups:
RCV disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, including the elderly and non-English speakers. These groups may face difficulties comprehending the intricacies of ranking candidates and navigating the elimination process. The additional barriers imposed by RCV can lead to disenfranchisement, as these individuals may struggle to participate effectively in the electoral process. The need for extensive voter education campaigns to mitigate these disparities further amplifies the financial strain associated with RCV implementation.

4. Increased Potential for Election Irregularities:
Instances of election irregularities have been observed in jurisdictions that have implemented RCV. San Francisco's 2011 municipal election highlighted concerns over overvoting in precincts with higher proportions of minority

and progressive voters. Studies conducted in Maine and New York City revealed negative consequences associated with RCV, including increased negative campaigning, high rates of "exhausted" ballots, and confusion among voters. These issues undermine the claim that RCV improves the electoral process and raise doubts about its fairness and accuracy.

Considering the significant costs of voter education, the confusion and potential for irregularities associated with RCV, and the disproportionate impact on vulnerable populations, it is crucial to critically evaluate the supposed benefits of RCV. The burden it places on the ballot counting process, the need for expensive education campaigns, and the potential for disenfranchisement suggest that the costs and drawbacks of RCV outweigh any potential advantages.

A study had an interesting finding was that cities utilizing RCV spent significantly more on elections than cities that did not, indicating a unique characteristic of these RCV cities that consistently increased their election expenditures.

Study Comparing Costs of RCV and Traditional Elections

The study collected data from 14 different municipalities, including a total of 239 elections, to analyze the cost of municipal elections. The election cycles were categorized

based on their status as control or experimental cycles and their relative position to the implementation of Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV). Six categories were created, and the mean and standard deviation were calculated for each category.

The analysis further revealed that RCV election cycles, during the implementation phase, were on average more expensive than before implementation. RCV cities experienced a larger magnitude of average election expense increase compared to control cities during implementation election cycles. Control cities saw an average increase of $0.23 per person, while RCV cities experienced an average increase of $0.65 per person.

Regarding ongoing costs of RCV elections after implementation, they aimed to determine the cost of facilitating RCV elections on an ongoing basis after the initial implementation. The regression analysis indicated that election cycles in RCV cities cost significantly more compared to control cities.

Based on the findings of the study comparing the cost differences between Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) and traditional elections, several important conclusions can be drawn.

During the implementation phase of RCV, election cycles in RCV cities were found to be more expensive on average

compared to before the implementation. RCV cities experienced a larger magnitude of average election expense increase compared to control cities. This suggests that the initial implementation of RCV entails additional costs that need to be considered.

The study indicates that ongoing costs of RCV elections after implementation are significantly higher compared to control cities. This finding suggests that RCV cities consistently incur higher costs in conducting elections even after the initial implementation phase.

These findings raise important concerns about the cost-effectiveness of RCV as a voting system. While RCV may offer certain advantages the study's findings suggest that these benefits may be outweighed by the increased financial burden associated with RCV.

It is crucial to critically evaluate the financial implications of implementing RCV, particularly considering the burden it places on the ballot counting process, the need for expensive voter education campaigns, and the potential for disenfranchisement of vulnerable populations.

RCV may have potential benefits, the study's findings suggest that the costs and drawbacks of RCV outweigh its advantages in terms of cost-effectiveness. Therefore, policymakers and election administrators should carefully

consider the financial implications before implementing RCV in their jurisdictions.

Information Cost Increase

The consideration of ranked choice voting at the city level in San Diego was rejected due to the perceived risks of confusing voters, increased election costs, and potential unintended consequences. Additionally, a researcher argues that the information costs of implementing ranked-choice voting would be higher compared to traditional elections, emphasizing the expenses involved in educating voters about the intricacies of the ranked-choice voting process. These findings suggest that ranked-choice voting may not offer a more cost-effective alternative to traditional elections, particularly when accounting for the substantial investment required in voter education. As further research and exploration of ranked-choice voting continue, careful consideration of its potential costs and benefits is crucial in determining its viability as a voting system.

How Ranked Choice Voting Impacts Election Costs: A Comparative Analysis

The study collected election cost data from seven local governments that adopted RCV between 2004 and 2011. Similar data were obtained from seven control municipalities that used traditional voting methods. The selection of control municipalities was based on similarities in population, budget size, location, election cycle schedule,

jurisdiction in charge of elections, and political makeup. Election costs were aggregated into standard two-year cycles and converted into per-capita costs for comparison.

Results:

The analysis focused on three categories: before, during, and after RCV implementation. Difference-in-difference regressions were conducted to identify any cost changes during and after RCV implementation. The study found that cost differences during and after RCV implementation were not statistically significant, indicating that RCV had no direct effect on the cost of elections. However, RCV jurisdictions were found to have significantly higher overall election costs compared to control cities.

Why?

RCV introduces challenges and expenses. The convoluted elimination rounds can burden the ballot counting process, and extensive voter education campaigns are required to familiarize voters with RCV. Moreover, RCV may disproportionately impact vulnerable populations and increase the potential for election irregularities.

The study concludes that while RCV does not directly impact the cost of elections during or after implementation, RCV jurisdictions consistently experience higher overall election costs compared to control cities. This suggests that the supposed cost-effectiveness of RCV needs critical

evaluation. The burden placed on the ballot counting process, the expense of voter education campaigns, and the potential disenfranchisement of vulnerable populations raise concerns about the cost-benefit balance of RCV. Policymakers and election administrators should carefully consider the financial implications before implementing RCV, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of its costs and drawbacks. Continued research and informed decision-making are essential to ensure the integrity and efficiency of the democratic process.

Minnetonka, Alaska, and New York Experience –

The implementation of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in Minnetonka, like in many other places, comes with both perceived cost savings and potential additional expenses. While RCV advocates argue that it can be more cost-effective in the long run, it is essential to consider the various factors that contribute to the overall cost of elections, including voter education.(4)

On one hand, RCV proponents argue that it can reduce costs by eliminating the need for separate primary and runoff elections, which can be expensive to administer. In traditional elections, if no candidate receives a majority of the votes, a costly runoff election may be required. RCV's instant-runoff mechanism eliminates the need for such runoffs, potentially saving money.

However, the claim that RCV is inherently cheaper is not always straightforward. The initial implementation of RCV requires investment in new voting systems and technology, which can be costly. Alaska & Minnetonka, like other jurisdictions, may need to upgrade its voting equipment to accommodate RCV.(2)

Moreover, one of the significant ongoing expenses associated with RCV is voter education. Ensuring that voters understand how to use the RCV system and rank their preferences accurately is crucial for the success of the new voting method. In places like New York and Alaska, voter education costs have been substantial.

In New York, voter education costs for the implementation of RCV in the 2021 primary election were over $15 million. In Alaska, where RCV was used in a statewide election, the state blew its voter education budget by 20-fold, spending $3.1 million solely on voter education efforts.(2)

Minnetonka would also need to allocate funds for comprehensive voter education campaigns to ensure that residents understand how RCV works, how to rank their choices, and the overall purpose and benefits of the system.(5) Failure to educate voters adequately could lead to confusion and even lower turnout, undermining the intended benefits of RCV, Alaska using Ranked Choice

Voting for the first time had the lowest voter turnout in history at 44.38%.(2)

Furthermore, while RCV aims to encourage candidates to appeal to a broader base of voters and reduce negative campaigning, the reality may not always align with these ideals. In competitive races, candidates may feel the need to invest more in voter outreach and education efforts to ensure their supporters understand how to use the ranked-choice ballot effectively.(4)

In conclusion, while Ranked Choice Voting can offer potential cost savings by eliminating runoff elections, its implementation also comes with additional expenses, particularly regarding voter education. Minnetonka, like any jurisdiction considering RCV, must carefully assess the overall costs and benefits of adopting the system, including the investment required for voter education. A well-executed voter education campaign is crucial to the success of RCV, and jurisdictions must be prepared to allocate the necessary resources to ensure that voters understand and embrace this new electoral me

(1) Alaska Policy Forum. (2020). [Document title]. http://alaskapolicyforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2020-10-APF-Ranked-Choice-Voting-Report.pdf

(2) Alaska Division of Elections. (n.d.). [Specific page title or "Home page"]. https://www.elections.alaska.gov/

(3) ESRA at University of Wisconsin. (2020). [The Cost of Ranked Choice Voting]. https://esra.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1556/2020/11/rhode.pdf

(4) MIT Election Data & Science Lab. (Year). [Article title]. https://electionlab.mit.edu/articles/cost-ranked-choice-voting

(5) MTKA Citizens 4 Common Sense. (n.d.). [Specific page title or "Home page"]. https://mtkacitizens4commonsense.com/

Chapter 6:

They Claim It Is Faster

Claims that Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) is faster than traditional runoff elections should be approached with skepticism. While proponents argue that RCV offers speed advantages, several factors warrant careful consideration. RCV eliminates the need for separate runoff elections, potentially saving time and resources. However, it is crucial to assess whether the time saved outweighs the complexities introduced by RCV. Simultaneous vote counting in RCV may expedite the process, but the overall efficiency and accuracy of concurrent calculations need to be evaluated, especially in larger and more complex elections. While ranked ballots are designed to streamline the counting process, their practical impact on speed can vary depending on voter familiarity and potential confusion. The use of technology and automation can enhance the speed of counting RCV votes, but it is important to acknowledge that factors such as electorate

size, ballot complexity, available resources, and counting infrastructure quality can still affect the overall speed.

Ranked Choice Voting is not always faster

The implementation of ranked-choice voting (RCV) has raised concerns regarding its speed and efficiency. One of the main factors contributing to this concern is the alteration required in the ballot counting process. RCV ballots need to be transported to a centralized location for counting due to multiple rounds of tabulation. This centralized tabulation process can increase the cost of the election and make it more susceptible to mismanagement. Furthermore, the intricate nature of counting the final results in RCV elections leads to delays in declaring the winner, often taking several days or weeks after Election Day, in Alaska's case we were the last State in the country to receive regular election results, even though the State invested in more electronic voting machines, and a statewide voting population of a small city of States like Florida who were able to report results in one day.(1) Such delays can raise suspicions of impropriety and significantly impact voter confidence, posing a threat to the democratic process.

Studies and examples from jurisdictions that have implemented RCV provide further evidence of challenges associated with this voting system. For instance, in the 2011 San Francisco Municipal Election, precincts with higher

proportions of specific demographic groups and progressive precincts were more likely to have ballots containing overvotes, indicating confusion or errors in the ranking process. Similarly, the first ranked-choice primary in New York City experienced a high rate of "exhausted" primary ballots, which raises concerns about the effectiveness of the system. In the 2022 Oakland, CA mayoral election, incorrect instructions on RCV ballots led to confusion, and significant overvoting occurred in certain precincts, reflecting demographic divisions.(2)

These instances highlight various challenges associated with RCV, including overvoting, ballot errors, confusion, and concerns about fairness and accuracy. Implementation issues and discrepancies across different precincts can result in higher rates of disenfranchisement and adversely impact voter trust. As jurisdictions consider adopting or expanding RCV, it is crucial to address these challenges and ensure that the system functions efficiently, accurately, and inclusively.

Case Study: Minneapolis, Minnesota's 2009 Mayoral Race

In the 2009 mayoral race in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the election office estimated that tabulation would take 37 eight-hour shifts with 102 election officials working for a turnout of 70,000 voters. In other words, tabulation was estimated to take 30,192 man-hours or nearly 13 days of round-the-clock counting.(2)

Case Study: New York City's 2021 Mayoral Democratic Primary

During New York City's 2021 mayoral Democratic primary, the election process took 15 days to reach a conclusion, with the two final candidates only separated by slightly more than one percent of the vote. A contributing factor to the delay was the erroneous inclusion of 135,000 test ballots.(2)

These case studies further illustrate the potential time-consuming nature of implementing RCV and the impact it can have on the timely determination of election outcomes.

Ranked-choice voting has raised concerns about its speed and efficiency. The centralized tabulation process, the complex nature of counting final results, and examples of challenges and errors in jurisdictions that have implemented RCV all contribute to the notion that RCV is not always faster. It is crucial for jurisdictions to address these challenges and ensure that the system functions efficiently, accurately, and inclusively to maintain voter trust and the integrity of the democratic process.

(1) National Public Radio (NPR). (2022, November 8). [Article title]. https://www.npr.org/2022/11/08/1129441237/florida-election-results

(2) Foundation for Government Accountability. (n.d.). Ranked choice voting: A disaster in disguise. Foundation for Government Accountability. https://thefga.org/research/ranked-choice-voting-a-disaster-in-disguise/

Chapter 7:

They Claim It Increases Turnout, Does It?

Claims that ranked-choice voting (RCV) increases voter turnout should be met with skepticism, as evidence suggests the opposite effect. Several examples and studies provide support for this observation. Cities such as Minneapolis and St. Paul, which have implemented RCV in local elections for a significant period, have consistently experienced lower voter turnout compared to other major metropolitan areas. Similarly, an analysis of San Francisco's elections over a 16-year period revealed a correlation between the adoption of RCV and a decline in voter participation. Moreover, jurisdictions utilizing RCV in odd or off-cycle election years consistently report an eight percent lower turnout compared to non-RCV jurisdictions. These findings challenge the notion that RCV positively impacts voter engagement.

The complexity of the RCV system compared to traditional voting methods can discourage new and infrequent voters from participating. Factors such as voter confusion, high rates of ballot exhaustion (when a ballot is invalidated due to incomplete rankings), and the complexity of tabulating results contribute to higher opportunity costs associated with RCV.

Additionally, specific examples further highlight the potential impact of RCV on voter turnout:

1. Burlington, Vermont: Despite implementing RCV for mayoral elections since 2006, Burlington has experienced instances of relatively low voter turnout in certain election years, such as the 2012 mayoral election.

2. San Francisco, California: While there have been cases of increased turnout with RCV in San Francisco, there have also been instances where voter participation remained low, as seen in the 2011 mayoral election.

3. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Although there was an initial increase in turnout during the first year of RCV implementation in 2009, subsequent elections in Minneapolis have shown mixed results, with some years experiencing relatively low voter participation despite using RCV.

These examples demonstrate that RCV implementation does not guarantee higher voter turnout and may, in some cases, be associated with lower participation rates.

1. Lower Voter Turnout in RCV Districts:

Several examples and studies indicate that districts using RCV have experienced lower voter turnout compared to traditional voting systems. This suggests that the adoption of RCV may not necessarily lead to increased voter participation.

1.1 Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota:

Both cities have employed RCV in local elections for over a decade. However, studies show that they "lag well behind other major metropolitan cities in municipal election voter turnout." This indicates that RCV implementation in these cities has not resulted in increased voter participation.

1.2 San Francisco, California:

A study analyzing San Francisco elections from 1995 to 2011 revealed a strong correlation between the adoption of RCV and a decline in voter turnout. While there have been instances of increased turnout in certain elections, there have also been cases where turnout remained low, such as the 2011 mayoral election.

1.3 Odd or Off-Cycle Election Years:

On average, jurisdictions using RCV in odd or off-cycle election years experience an eight percent lower voter

turnout compared to non-RCV jurisdictions. This consistent pattern suggests that RCV may contribute to decreased participation in these elections.

2. Factors Contributing to Decreased Turnout with RCV:

The complexity of the RCV system compared to traditional voting methods can discourage new and infrequent voters from participating. Factors such as voter confusion, high rates of ballot exhaustion, and the complexity of tabulating results contribute to higher opportunity costs associated with RCV.

3. Specific Examples Highlighting RCV's Impact on Turnout:

3.1 Burlington, Vermont:

Despite implementing RCV for mayoral elections since 2006, Burlington has experienced instances of relatively low voter turnout in certain election years, such as the 2012 mayoral election.

3.2 San Francisco, California:

While there have been cases of increased turnout with RCV in San Francisco, there have also been instances where voter participation remained low, as seen in the 2011 mayoral election.

3.3 Minneapolis, Minnesota:

Although there was an initial increase in turnout during the first year of RCV implementation in 2009, subsequent elections in Minneapolis have shown mixed results, with some years experiencing relatively low voter participation despite using RCV.

4. Alaska's Lowest Voter Turnout in History:

Alaska experienced the lowest voter turnout in the history of the state, with a participation rate of only 44.38% in November 2022. While multiple factors contribute to historic voter turnout, it is worth noting that the Alaska Division of Elections invested significant resources in voter education and outreach. While not claiming RCV as the sole cause, it is essential to consider the broader impact of RCV and the concerns it has raised in other cities.

The evidence suggests that RCV implementation does not guarantee higher voter turnout and, in some cases, may be associated with lower participation rates. Combined with the issues observed in other jurisdictions, the case against ranked-choice voting becomes more compelling. Leaders from both the left and right have expressed reservations about RCV, emphasizing the need for further evaluation and consideration of its impact on the

Voter Participation with Ranked Choice Voting in the United States

Authors: David C. Kimball, Joseph Anthony

This research study compares the voter turnout and participation in elections using ranked choice voting (RCV) and plurality voting systems in the United States. The authors conducted a difference-in-differences analysis, matching cities that implemented RCV with demographically similar cities that used plurality voting on the same dates. RCV does not have a significant impact on overall voter turnout and ballot completion in municipal elections.

While some claim that RCV can reinvigorate elections by fostering more collaboration, providing a more complete expression of voter preferences, and reducing negative campaigning, others raise concerns about the complexity of ranking candidates and potential disparities in understanding the voting system. Previous research has shown mixed evidence on the impact of RCV on voter participation.(6)

The study highlights the RCV effects on overall turnout and ballot completion in local elections are limited. It emphasizes the importance of evaluating RCV alongside the plurality system it typically replaces in the United States. The findings contribute to the ongoing discussions

surrounding RCV and its potential implications for voter engagement in American elections.

Data and Methods:

The study compares a "treatment" group of cities that have adopted RCV to a "control" group of cities using plurality voting. (12)

The study examines recent elections through the 2015 cycle for both sets of cities, as well as the last election or two prior to the adoption of RCV. Elections held in 2012 and other years coinciding with a presidential contest are excluded because voter participation in presidential years is influenced by the presidential campaign and tends to be higher than turnout in local elections in other years. (6)

Voter turnout, defined as the percentage of eligible voters who cast a ballot, is a commonly used measure of participation. The number of ballots cast is collected from city and county election offices.

Turnout is examined in local primary, general, and runoff elections. Plurality systems typically involve a primary election and a runoff election to choose local officials. The top candidates from the primary election, usually the top two, advance to the runoff election, where the winner secures the office. In RCV systems, which allow voters to rank candidates in order of preference.(7)

Results from Minneapolis: Socioeconomic Bias in Voter Participation

RCV fails to improve socioeconomic biases in participation (Jacobs and Miller 2013, 2014; Neely and McDaniel 2015; McDaniel 2016). For American voters who have grown accustomed to plurality voting, properly casting an RCV ballot may take some learning and skill, which may confer a participatory advantage on voters with more resources (i.e., wealth, education, and civic skills). In a recent we, Jacobs and Miller (2014) report on the 2013 Minneapolis election, noting higher rates of voter participation in white and high-income wards. (

The evidence suggests that districts using ranked-choice voting (RCV) have experienced lower voter turnout compared to traditional voting systems. Examples from cities like Minneapolis, St. Paul, and San Francisco, as well as studies analyzing odd or off-cycle election years, consistently show a correlation between RCV implementation and decreased participation rates. Factors such as the complexity of the RCV system, voter confusion, high rates of ballot exhaustion, and the intricacies of tabulating results contribute to higher opportunity costs associated with RCV.

Specific instances in Burlington, Vermont, San Francisco, California, and Minneapolis, Minnesota, further highlight

that RCV implementation does not guarantee increased voter turnout. Despite adopting RCV, these cities have experienced mixed results, with some election years showing relatively low voter participation.

It is worth noting that Alaska's historic low voter turnout in 2022, while not solely attributed to RCV, highlights the broader impact and concerns associated with the system.

A report on the 2011 San Francisco Municipal Election examined the usage of ranked-choice voting (RCV) and found that precincts with higher proportions of Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, and older voters, as well as more progressive precincts, were more likely to have ballots containing overvotes. Moreover, precincts with higher concentrations of older, moderate, Latino, and Asian and Pacific Islander voters tended to vote for only one candidate instead of ranking multiple preferences. In the 2022 Oakland, CA Mayoral election, incorrect instructions on RCV ballots caused confusion, leading to added challenges in the election process. Furthermore, a significant number of ballots (3.5%) were overvoted, with varying rates across different precincts, aligning with the demographic division of Oakland.

The implementation of RCV in precincts is closely correlated with demographic factors. Low-income and predominantly non-white precincts face challenges with

RCV, resulting in higher rates of disenfranchisement compared to high-income, predominantly white precincts. Overvoting, along with other error types such as duplicate candidates and skipped ranks, poses significant issues in RCV ballots. Some precincts experience error rates as high as 23%, affecting one in four voters.

These findings highlight the challenges and discrepancies associated with ranked-choice voting. Concerns about overvoting, undervoting, and demographic disparities in ballot errors call for a closer examination of the system's effectiveness and fairness. Several Democrat governors, including Governor Gavin Newsom of California, former Governor Jerry Brown, Governor Charlie Baker of Massachusetts, and Governor Steve Sisolak of Nevada, have expressed concerns about voter confusion and the complexity of ranked-choice voting. Their viewpoints emphasize the importance of further exploration, analysis, and education to ensure a fair and reliable voting system.

Studies and examples from Minneapolis, St. Paul, San Francisco, and odd or off-cycle election years suggest that districts using RCV have lower voter turnout rates compared to traditional voting systems. The complexity of the RCV system, including factors such as voter confusion, high rates of ballot exhaustion, and the complexity of tabulating results, can discourage new and infrequent voters from participating. Specific examples from Burlington, San

Francisco, and Minneapolis further highlight the potential impact of RCV on voter turnout, showing mixed results and instances of low participation despite using RCV.

There is a research study comparing RCV and plurality voting systems in the United States found that RCV does not have a significant impact on overall voter turnout and ballot completion in municipal elections. The evidence suggests that RCV implementation does not guarantee higher voter turnout and may, in some cases, be associated with lower participation rates. The complexity of the system and concerns about disparities and errors in RCV ballots raise important considerations for the fairness and effectiveness of ranked-choice voting.

Potential Bias

One potential bias associated with RCV was identified in the study. Older people in RCV cities were less likely to report understanding voting instructions and RCV elections, indicating a potential age-related bias.

The adoption of complex voting systems like RCV can lead to confusion and increased voting errors. While the study mainly focuses on how voters recalled ballot instructions shortly after voting, it acknowledges that concerns about information demands and potential voting errors associated with RCV should not be dismissed. Researchers need to

continue examining evidence of bias, particularly racial and ethnic bias, associated with such voting systems.

The study suggests that reported understanding of voting instructions and election systems is associated with education, indicating that voter education campaigns may play a role in increasing understanding of RCV and reducing potential voting errors.

It is important to note that the study's method of measuring reported understanding has limitations, as it cannot observe actual voted ballots or link them to specific voters. It is possible that some respondents cast invalid RCV ballots but still reported understanding the voting instructions and RCV. If the propensity to commit voting errors and report understanding is concentrated among racial and ethnic minorities, the study's findings may underestimate the potential racial and ethnic bias in understanding RCV.

Districts using ranked-choice voting have lower voter turnout rates

Implementing RCV lowers voter turnout rates. For example, both Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, have run local elections using RCV for more than a decade, and both “lag well behind other major metropolitan cities in municipal election voter turnout.”

In fact, comparatively lower voter turnout in jurisdictions using RCV is a consistent pattern. A study of San Francisco elections from 1995 to 2011 revealed a strong relationship between a decline in voter turnout and the adoption of RCV.[18] Furthermore, during odd or off-cycle election years, RCV jurisdictions have on average eight percent lower voter turnout rates than non-RCV jurisdictions.

Because RCV is more complex than traditional voting, the system inherently discourages new and infrequent voters from participating.[20] Between voter confusion, high rates of ballot exhaustion, and the difficulty of tabulating the results, RCV increases the opportunity costs of electoral participation.

Alaska Policy Forum Summary:

Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV) has the potential to impact voter turnout, which is an important metric for evaluating the performance of a voting system. Voter turnout in the United States is generally low compared to international standards. In the 2018 midterm elections, only 50.3% of eligible voters nationwide cast a ballot.(5)

Proponents argue that RCV could improve voter participation by making voters feel that their voice has a greater impact on the election outcome. However, others believe that RCV could discourage voters who are confused about how to vote or who feel uninformed about the

candidates. The complexity of the ballot in RCV could also make it harder for voters to understand the connection between their votes and government policies.

Empirical evidence on the impact of RCV on voter turnout is mixed. Some studies show that RCV slightly depresses turnout compared to plurality elections. However, the limited sample size of jurisdictions implementing RCV in the US and the difficulty of isolating other variables that influence turnout make it challenging to draw definitive conclusions.

A study of four cities in California found that voter turnout remained stable after adopting RCV. On the other hand, the ACLU testified to the Kansas Special Committee on Elections that RCV has suppressed voter turnout, particularly among segments of the electorate that are already less likely to participate.

Proponents of RCV point to an analysis commissioned by FairVote, which suggests that RCV is associated with a 10-point increase in voter turnout compared to primary and run-off elections. However, this increase may be due to the compression of voting and the reduction of candidates into a single election, rather than the direct impact of RCV on turnout. Overall, the study indicates that RCV has minimal effects on voter participation rates.

A study of San Francisco's election data found that RCV led to a decline in turnout among African American and white voters, exacerbating disparities between likely and unlikely voters. This was attributed, in part, to the increased information costs of voting under RCV, which discouraged low-propensity voters.

Due to the ongoing debate and varying findings, it is not responsible to make definitive claims about whether RCV actually increases turnout compared to plurality elections. Further research and analysis are necessary to fully understand the relationship between RCV and voter participation. (5)

University of Minnesota –

Ranked Choice Voting and Voter Turnout: Mixed Evidence

One of the claims made by advocates of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) is that it can increase voter turnout and engagement, particularly among voters of color. The argument is that RCV offers a wider range of candidates, which may attract voters who were previously disengaged or dissatisfied with the available choices. However, the evidence supporting this claim is not as robust as advocates suggest.

Research on RCV's impact on voter turnout among communities of color has yielded mixed results. Several studies have reported that RCV decreases turnout and the

use of ranking opportunities among African Americans, implying that RCV might not be as appealing to voters from this demographic group.

In contrast, white voters were more likely to embrace the concept of ranking a higher number of candidates, which suggests that they might be more comfortable with the complexity of the RCV system.

Overall, analysts have not found a significant difference in turnout between cities using RCV and those using the traditional voting system. Moreover, there have been reports of errors, confusion, and lower turnout associated with the greater complexity of RCV, raising concerns about its efficacy in increasing voter participation.

The evidence regarding RCV's impact on voter turnout, especially among communities of color, is inconclusive. While some studies indicate a potential decrease in turnout and engagement among certain groups, other research shows no substantial difference in overall voter participation. (14)

New York 2023:

This research paper section highlights the issue of low turnout in New York City primaries during the 2023 election. The article discusses the abysmally low voter participation, with just 6.5% of eligible voters casting their ballots. The limited competition and lackluster primary

turnout are identified as significant concerns that undermine local democracy in the city. The section explores the consequences of low turnout, including the skewed representation of the electorate and the potential negative impact on elected officials' behavior and responsiveness to constituents' needs.

Impact of Low Turnout on Electoral Process:

The article emphasizes that the low turnout in New York City primaries affects the democratic process negatively. With Republicans being noncompetitive in these races, the Democratic primary effectively replaces the general election. This lack of competition discourages voters from participating, allowing a small fraction of the population to decide the outcome. The dominance of special interest groups, political clubs, and the real estate industry further exacerbates the lack of political diversity and responsiveness in the candidates selected.(8)

Consequences on Elected Officials and Governance:

The section also explores how low primary turnout may lead to politicians' lack of accountability. Incumbents can become entrenched in their positions, negotiating policies behind closed doors with little public input. Lack of public engagement and limited competition may embolden politicians, as seen in the case of Mayor Eric Adams berating a constituent who questioned his handling of rent regulations. With incumbency firmly established, the

responsiveness of elected officials to the needs of the majority can diminish, affecting policy outcomes.(9)

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Chapter 8:

They Claim RCV is more Civil

Based on the findings of the study examining the impact of ranked-choice voting (RCV) on campaigns and civility, states should approach the implementation of RCV with caution. One of the main claims made by RCV reformers is that it will promote more civil campaigns by incentivizing candidates to seek the second-place votes of supporters of different candidates. However, the research conducted raises doubts about this claim.

The study analyzed independent expenditures for and against candidates using a difference-in-differences analysis. The results showed a significant increase in negative spending in Maine after the implementation of RCV. This finding challenges the notion that RCV leads to more civil campaigns.

To provide further evidence, the study examined a dataset of Facebook advertisements mentioning congressional

candidates in Maine during the first year RCV was used (2018). A sentiment analysis was conducted to determine the sentiment of each advertisement, particularly whether it was negative or not. Through genetic matching, an approximation of an experiment was performed to assess the impact of RCV on civility. Surprisingly, the analysis revealed that the 2018 campaign in Maine was even more negative compared to paired districts around the country.

These findings suggest that the implementation of RCV may not necessarily lead to more civil campaigns as claimed by reformers. Instead, the study indicates a potential increase in negative campaigning following the adoption of RCV. Therefore, states should be skeptical about the impact of RCV on campaigns and carefully consider these research findings before deciding to implement RCV. (1)

More evidence in Maine:

In Maine's 2018 gubernatorial primaries, there was a significant increase in independent expenditures compared to previous primary elections. Independent expenditures refer to spending by third-party groups not affiliated with a specific candidate or party. In 2018, $207,500 was spent opposing specific candidates, while $146,775 was spent supporting candidates.

This increase in independent expenditures is noteworthy because there were no independent expenditures opposing

candidates in the 2006, 2010, and 2014 gubernatorial primaries. The 2018 election was similar to the 2010 election in terms of having a large field of candidates and an open seat due to the incumbent being term-limited.

In terms of fundraising, candidate Adam Cote had raised over $1 million in the 2018 Democratic primary, while candidate Janet Mills had raised around $792,000 before June 12, 2018. Rather than attacking Cote directly, Mills may have allowed third-party groups to launch attacks against him to avoid tarnishing her own image in the eyes of Cote supporters. One such attack came from Maine Women Together, which spent $192,500 to attack Cote for his past Republican affiliation and accepting corporate donations. (1)

In Maine's 2018 Second Congressional District election:

Which was the first general election in Maine to implement Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV), there was a significant increase in independent expenditures compared to previous elections. Approximately $11.52 million was spent through independent expenditures opposing a candidate in 2018, a 24% increase from 2016.

When comparing opposition expenditures in non-presidential elections (2014 and 2018), there was a

substantial 341% increase. In 2014, only $2.91 million was spent on independent expenditures opposing a candidate.

This data suggests that ranked-choice voting may not effectively reduce negative campaigning, as it casts doubts on the claim that RCV improves the tone and civility of political races. However, it is important to note that this analysis does not provide conclusive evidence regarding the impact of ranked-choice voting on negative campaigning. Further research may be needed to draw definitive conclusions. (1)

Alaskan Experience:

Based on our analysis of the same parameters, we have observed a significant increase in negativity during the 2022 election compared to traditional Plurality voting. Negative campaigning against two Republicans persisted from the early stages of the Special Primary in April 2022 until November 2022. The absence of a closed party primary allowed more time for the two Republicans to attack each other rather than focusing on criticizing the opposing party. In fact, one of the Republican candidates even endorsed the Democrat as their second choice in the U.S. House Election, primarily due to the negative campaign ads and targeting from the other Republican candidate.

Another noteworthy finding is the substantial increase in campaign expenditures supporting Lisa Murkowski

compared to previous elections. Supporters of Nick Begich spent over $1.7 million on advertising in Alaska, which is significantly higher than usual. Normally, the Republicans would have had a single candidate advancing to the general election. However, due to the presence of two Republican candidates, a substantial portion of the campaign funds was directed towards attacking fellow Republicans in both the Special Primary and General, as well as the Regular Primary and General elections. (2022 in Alaska due to Ranked Choice Voting had 4 elections spanning early spring through November, brings a whole new meaning to the term exhausted.)

It is worth mentioning that the Democrat was the sole candidate on the ticket. However, according to the law in the Special General, the Division of Elections in Alaska should have retained Al Gross's name on the ballot, which could have potentially resulted in different outcomes.

These findings highlight the intensification of negativity in the 2022 election and the significant impact it had on campaign dynamics and expenditures. The presence of multiple Republican candidates, coupled with aggressive attacks within the party, diverted resources and influenced the overall electoral landscape.

Throughout the 2022 election season running for Alaska's sole U.S. House of Representatives seat. Alaskan Governor

Sarah Palin had this to say about her experience with Rank Choice Voting and her thoughts on the claims that Rank Choice Voting is more civil considering her experience with elections and poor treatment by national media for decades. Former Alaska Governor Sarah Palin criticized ranked-choice voting, referring to it as a "new crazy, convoluted, confusing" way to elect lawmakers that she believes has disenfranchised 60% of Alaska voters. In a statement, Palin argued that ranked-choice voting was originally presented as a method to improve the representation of the people's will in elections but has instead produced the opposite effect. She expressed hope that Alaskans would learn from this voting system mistake and rectify it in the next election.(9)

U.S. Senator Tom Cotton also weighed in on the Alaska experience with ranked-choice voting, highlighting that although 60% of Alaska voters supported a Republican candidate, the convoluted process and ballot exhaustion resulted in a Democrat winning, which he viewed as a form of voter disenfranchisement.

In the special Jungle Primary election in Alaska, the intial results showed that only 10.1% of the vote went to Peltola, 27% to Palin, and 19.1% to Republican Nick Begich, Al Gross placed in 3rd with 12.6%. In this race since it was an Jungle primary we combined all the votes for a Republican, including candidates that did not make the Top 4 General.

Combining Palin (27%), Begich (19.1%), Sweeney (5.9%), Coghill (2.4%), and Revak (2.3%) we get 56.7%. (8)

Please note that Al Gross was removed from the ballot after dropping out, please see Alaska section to explain the Supreme Court's ruling on this matter.

This same pattern repeated itself in the Special Top 4 General, (Palin 31.3%, Begich 28.5%, Peltola 40.2%) Republican total vote 59.8%, Regular Primary (Palin 30.2%, Begich 26.2%, Peltola 36.8%, Sweeney 3.8%) Total Republican vote 61% including candidates that did not make the Top 4 General, and Regular Top 4 General (Palin 25.8%, Begich 23.6%, Peltola 48.7%, Bye 1.9%) Total Republican vote 49.4%. Though closer than the Special Primary, Special General, and Regular Primary, the turnout by percentage was the lowest in history. I personally voted in the Special Primary through the Regular Primary, but I did not vote in the Regular General Election, primarily because I felt I already knew the result and partly due to voter exhaustion.

Throughout these 4 elections the two top Republican candidates spent more time and money attacking each other than they did attacking the Democrat in the race. The claim that Rank Choice Voting is more civil should be questioned considering Alaska and Maine's examples that we address in this book.

Looking at Alaska again and looking at the Lisa Murkowski and Kelly Tshibaka race we see that the same pattern of Republicans attacking Republicans is also featured prominently in this race. From the early part of 2022 throughout the year Kelly Tshibaka and Lisa Murkowski were attacking each other, which is quite normal for most elections, though in 2022 due to the Jungle Primary and Rank Choice Top 4 General Election, the attacks against fellow Republicans, which would normally end when the Closed Republican Primary was over, continued after August, all the way until Election day in November. The negative campaign ads were mostly directed from one Republican to another Republican, considering in this race the Democrat only received 10.7% of the total General Election votes, we are surprised that so many Democrats support Rank Choice Voting in Alaska. This was the worst performance by a Democrat in a U.S. Senate Election in all of Alaska's recorded history. In the 2020 U.S. Senate Election 41.2% voted for a Democrat and 53.9% voted for a Republican. In 2022, 89.3% voted for a Republican and only 10.7% voted for a Democrat. In 2 years, Alaska's GOP was able to get 30.5% of the Democrat Voters to vote for a Republican, pretty amazing. This calls into question the claim that Rank Choice Voting can not be gamed. This looks like pretty obvious gaming in this authors opinion. (8)

If gaming or manipulating the electoral system is possible in elections, it can have several effects on voters:

1. Disillusionment: When voters perceive that the electoral system can be gamed or manipulated, it can lead to a sense of disillusionment and loss of faith in the democratic process. They may feel that their votes don't truly matter if the system can be manipulated to produce predetermined outcomes.

2. Strategic voting: The possibility of gaming elections can lead to strategic voting, where voters may not necessarily vote for their preferred candidate but instead vote strategically to prevent certain outcomes or manipulate the system themselves. This can distort the true expression of voters' preferences.

3. Voter suppression: If voters believe that the electoral system is vulnerable to gaming, it may discourage some individuals from participating in the electoral process altogether. They may feel that their votes will not have an impact or that the system is rigged against them, leading to reduced voter turnout and potentially disenfranchising certain groups.

4. Weakening of democracy: If the electoral system can be easily gamed, it undermines the principles of fairness, transparency, and equal representation that are crucial to a healthy democracy. This can erode trust in democratic institutions and lead to a decline in overall democratic governance.

It is important for electoral systems to be designed in a way that minimizes the potential for gaming or manipulation, ensuring that the voice of the voters is accurately reflected and their confidence in the democratic process is maintained.

Ranked Choice Voting and Polarization: Is RCV More Civil?

Proponents of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) claim that it can reduce political polarization by encouraging more moderate and independent candidates to run for office. They argue that voters would no longer fear "wasting" their votes on preferred candidates, which could lead to the election of extreme alternatives. However, upon closer examination of the research, it appears that RCV's impact on polarization is not as promising as advocates suggest.

Researchers have found limited evidence to support the proposition that RCV decreases polarization. In fact, a sophisticated analysis revealed that RCV may have had the opposite effect, increasing animosity among Democrats and Republicans compared to the current electoral system. This finding suggests that RCV might not be the panacea for reducing partisan divisions that its proponents claim.

Furthermore, a study of the 2020 election in Maine, where RCV was implemented, showed that while RCV elections were more open to new parties, independent and third-

party candidates still received only a small share of the vote, specifically 6.6%. This suggests that RCV might not significantly alter the overall political landscape and might not lead to a substantial increase in the representation of diverse viewpoints.

In conclusion, the evidence regarding RCV's impact on political polarization is inconclusive and, in some cases, even suggests that it could exacerbate animosity between parties. While RCV advocates assert that the system promotes civility and moderation, research findings do not overwhelmingly support this claim. As such, it is essential to critically evaluate the potential effects of RCV on the political climate before advocating for its widespread adoption.

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) proponents often claim that this voting system leads to decreased negative campaigning among candidates. They argue that in RCV, candidates have an incentive to make positive appeals to voters for their second or third votes, as alienating voters who may rank them lower could harm their chances.

However, research on this claim paints a more complex picture. While some studies suggest that RCV reduced negative campaigning, most research indicates little to no impact on negativity or even increased negativity.

Moreover, a separate study examining Maine's RCV elections in 2018 reported an increase in negative campaigning despite the claims of reduced negativity.(1)

These findings indicate that the claim of RCV leading to more civil campaigns may not hold true in practice. The complexities of candidate behavior and campaign strategies in RCV systems can result in varied outcomes regarding the tone and nature of political campaigning.

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Chapter 9:

They Claim RCV reduces or eliminates Spoiler Candidates

Ranked Choice Voting claims to reduce or eliminate spoiler candidates.
What is a spoiler candidate?

A spoiler candidate, in the context of elections, refers to a candidate or political party whose presence on the ballot negatively affects the chances of another candidate or party with similar ideological views. Spoiler candidates can split the votes of like-minded voters, leading to a potentially unfavorable outcome for the candidate or party that these voters would have otherwise supported.

The spoiler effect is most commonly observed in first-past-the-post or plurality voting systems, where the candidate with the highest number of votes, even if it is not an outright majority, wins the election. In such systems, if multiple candidates with similar platforms run for the same

office, they can divide the votes of their shared constituency. This division may result in none of these candidates securing a majority of votes, allowing a candidate with fewer overall votes but a consolidated support base to win the election.

The term "spoiler" suggests that the candidate or party is unintentionally undermining the chances of their like-minded competitors by splitting the vote. It is often seen as a problematic aspect of certain electoral systems, as it can lead to outcomes where the majority of voters' preferences are not accurately represented.

Vermont –

Thirteen years ago in Burlington, Vermont, Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) failed to deliver on its promises, resulting in controversy and perceived diminished legitimacy of the elected mayor. In 2009, the mayor was elected even though more voters marked their ballots for a different specific candidate for the office. The following year, in 2010, IRV was repealed, and the city returned to the plurality rule.

In 2021, Burlington voted to readopt IRV, and in the same election, the incumbent Mayor Miro Weinberger was reelected under plurality with a 43% vote share, just 0.9% more than the runner-up Max Tracy, while independent Ali Dieng received nearly 13% of the vote. This close election raised concerns about possible spoilers affecting the

outcome. The call for the re-adoption of the ranked ballot was fueled by the need to collect more information from voters under the traditional "mark-only-one" ballot system. The Burlington IRV charter change is currently awaiting approval from the Vermont legislature to take effect.

Alaska – 2022

In the 2022 US House Election in Alaska that used Ranked Choice Voting (RCV), a spoiler candidate emerged, challenging the notion that RCV claims to eliminate spoiler candidates. Spoiler candidates are those who may not have a significant chance of winning but can potentially influence the outcome of an election by siphoning votes away from another candidate with similar political ideologies. RCV is often touted as a system that mitigates the impact of spoiler candidates, but the Alaskan election presented a different reality.

In this election, three prominent candidates were in contention: Begich, Peltola, and Palin. According to the voting data, 53% of voters ranked Begich higher than Peltola, and 61% ranked Begich higher than Palin. However, the real challenge arose from the fact that voters who ranked Palin first, 58% of them, then went on to rank Begich second. This indicates that Begich had a broad appeal across a wide spectrum of voters, even among those who initially supported Palin.

The spoiler effect becomes apparent when considering that if 6,000 of those voters who ranked Palin first had instead ranked Begich first, not voted at all, or ranked Peltola first, Peltola would have lost. In essence, these 6,000 voters inadvertently influenced the outcome of the election, potentially altering the final result.

These concrete voting numbers challenge the notion that RCV eliminates the spoiler effect. The presence of a strong spoiler candidate and the strategic voting behavior observed in the Alaskan election demonstrate that RCV does not completely eliminate the potential for a candidate to impact the outcome by diverting votes from other candidates.

Critics of RCV often argue that the system can be overly complex, leading to confusion and unexpected outcomes. While RCV is designed to encourage voters to rank candidates based on their true preferences without fear of wasting their vote on a less viable candidate, the Alaskan election illustrates that strategic voting and the potential for spoiler candidates still exist in RCV.

These hard numbers from the Alaskan election provide tangible evidence that challenges the effectiveness of RCV in eliminating spoiler candidates. The election results have prompted skepticism and criticism of RCV, as some argue that it may not live up to its promises of providing a fair and representative voting system. As discussions continue on

the merits and drawbacks of various voting systems, it is essential to thoroughly analyze real-world examples like the Alaskan election to better understand the impact of RCV on electoral outcomes.

Alaska RCV results, August 2022

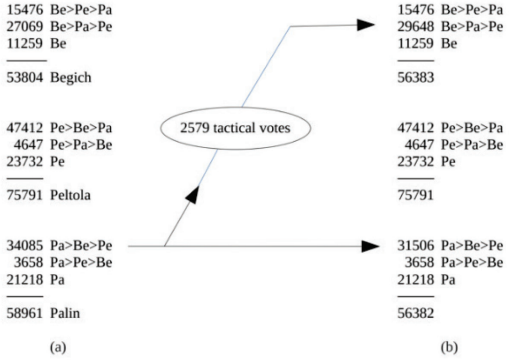

Table 2 (a) Ballot rankings for the top three candidates in the semifinal round. (b) For the 34085 Palin voters that disliked Peltola the most, had 2579 or more of these voters voted tactically, they would have prevented Peltola from winning the IRV election in August 2022.

Begich	87889	Be>Pe
Peltola	79449	Pe>Be
	8440	

Peltola	91267	Pe>Pa
Palin	86030	Pa>Pe
	5237	

Begich	101216	Be>Pa
Palin	63608	Pa>Be
	37608	

Table 3 Pairwise tallies for the three significant candidates, three pairings. The tallies for the Peltola-Palin pairing are consistent with the results of the IRV final round. Also note that only candidate Begich defeats every other candidate he faces.

The failure of Instant Runof to accomplish the purpose for which it was adopted: a case study from Burlington

Vermont
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Chapter 10:

They Claim RCV reduces or eliminates Gaming

An Analysis of Alaska's Shift from Traditional Plurality Election to Ranked Choice Voting: Unveiling Potential Gaming of the Election System

We will examine the significant shift in voter behavior in Alaska's US Senate elections between 2020 and 2022, where the state transitioned from a traditional closed primary and plurality election to a Jungle Primary with Top 4 Ranked Choice Voting method. The focus is on understanding the substantial swing in voter support for Democrat candidates, which experienced a dramatic decrease from 41.2% in 2020 to a mere 10.7% in 2022. The results indicate a clear example of potential gaming of the election system aimed at hindering other candidates from securing victory.(1)

Introduction:

Alaska introduced a significant electoral reform in 2022, implementing Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) for the first time. This new system aimed to provide voters with more choices, mitigate the "spoiler effect," and promote candidates with broader appeal. However, the 2022 US Senate election revealed a notable shift in voter preferences, particularly among Democrat supporters. This paper delves into the factors behind this shift, exploring whether the introduction of RCV had unintended consequences.(1)

Methodology:

The research analyzes voter data from the 2020 and 2022 US Senate elections in Alaska. The 2020 election utilized a traditional closed primary and plurality voting system, while the 2022 election employed a Jungle Primary with Top 4 Ranked Choice Voting method. The primary focus is on the performance of the Democratic candidates in both elections and the percentage shift in their voter support.

Results:

In the 2020 US Senate election, the Republican candidate Dan Sullivan secured victory with 53.9% of the vote (191,112 votes). The Democratic candidate, Al Gross, received 41.2% of the vote (146,068 votes).

However, the 2022 election under RCV witnessed a notable change in voter behavior. Two Republicans collectively

obtained 86% of the total votes cast, with 226,219 votes. The Democratic candidate, who had received significant support in 2020, experienced a dramatic decrease in voter backing, obtaining only 10.7% of the vote (28,233 votes).

Discussion:

The striking drop of 30.5 percentage points in voter support for the Democratic candidate from 2020 to 2022 indicates a noteworthy shift in preferences. This change can be attributed to the introduction of the RCV system, which might have influenced voters' strategic behavior.

The Jungle Primary with Top 4 Ranked Choice Voting method allowed voters to rank candidates in order of preference. To block other candidates from winning, some voters may have strategically ranked only Republican candidates while leaving the Democratic candidate unranked. This approach could potentially lead to the elimination of the Democratic candidate in the early rounds, ultimately favoring the Republican contenders in the final round.

Conclusion:

The implementation of Ranked Choice Voting in Alaska's 2022 US Senate election resulted in an unexpected and substantial shift in voter support for Democratic candidates. The decline of 30.5% from 2020 to 2022 suggests a potential gaming of the election system by voters to prevent other candidates from winning. Further research is needed to

explore the motives and implications of this strategic behavior to ensure a fair and transparent electoral process. Policymakers and election officials should carefully assess the impact of such electoral reforms to maintain the integrity of the democratic process.(1)

Australia – Gaming

In Australia, gaming and strategic maneuvering are common occurrences in elections that use the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system, a type of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV). Candidates may switch parties during their political careers to build influence and then strategically "sell" that influence to candidates who are more likely to win or to assist their previous party. This practice, often referred to as "preference trading," has been a subject of criticism and controversy.(2)

The phenomenon of gaming and preference trading in Australian elections highlights potential concerns with the use of RCV systems. While the intention behind RCV is to provide voters with more choice and flexibility, the reality can be more complex. As previously discussed, RCV allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference, which can lead to strategic voting and attempts to manipulate the system for desired outcomes.

In some cases, candidates may even engage in tactical swapping of preferences with other candidates or parties to maximize their chances of winning. This strategic

maneuvering has been observed in various elections, both in Australia and in other countries that use RCV or similar voting methods. The practice can lead to outcomes where candidates who may not be the top choice of a majority of voters end up winning, simply due to tactical preference trading.(2)

Oakland Gaming -

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) is a voting system that allows voters to rank multiple candidates in order of preference. While proponents argue that RCV promotes more civil and inclusive elections by electing candidates with broad support, critics raise concerns about potential gaming and "side deals" that can arise under this system.

One of the criticisms of RCV is that it encourages candidates to engage in strategic campaigning and "side deals" to secure second-choice votes from other candidates. This could lead to what some perceive as collusion or backroom negotiations, which can undermine the integrity of the electoral process. Critics argue that these side deals can be opaque, potentially leading to secret agreements that are not transparent to the voters.

For example, there have been cases where candidates in RCV elections allegedly approached each other to discuss forming alliances or support arrangements. These actions can raise suspicions among voters about the fairness and transparency

of the electoral process. In some instances, these discussions may even be perceived as violating election laws or regulations, depending on the specific circumstances and local laws.

An infamous example often cited in discussions about RCV and side deals is the case of the Oakland mayoral race in 2010. During that election, it was alleged that Jean Quan, who went on to become the mayor, made a side deal with another candidate, Rebecca Kaplan. The accusation suggested that there was an agreement between the two candidates to exchange second-choice votes, potentially influencing the outcome of the election.(2)

Critics argue that such side deals can lead to strategic behavior by candidates, who may modify their campaign strategies to appeal to certain voting blocs or make concessions to gain support from specific candidates. This, in turn, can create a perception among voters that candidates are more concerned with tactical maneuvering than with genuine policy positions or principles.

It is important to note that not all ranked-choice elections result in side deals or collusion, and the extent of such behavior can vary depending on the specific election and the candidates involved. Additionally, proponents of RCV argue that it can encourage candidates to appeal to a broader range

of voters and foster more positive and issue-focused campaigns.

However, critics maintain that the potential for side deals and strategic campaigning remains a concern in some ranked-choice elections. They argue that a voting system should be designed to minimize opportunities for strategic manipulation and maintain the integrity and transparency of the electoral process. As RCV gains traction in various jurisdictions, these concerns continue to be part of the ongoing debate surrounding electoral reform.(3)

Moving Beyond 2023 -

The example of gaming in Alaska, Australia, & Oakland can be paralleled with concerns raised in previous conversations about RCV adoption and its potential implications in the United States. Issues such as voter confusion, high rates of exhausted ballots, and challenges in tabulation have been observed in various jurisdictions. The case of Aspen, Colorado, where IRV was adopted and then repealed after just one election due to confusion and complexity, serves as a cautionary example.(4)

Moreover, criticisms from figures such as former California Governor Jerry Brown, who expressed concerns about RCV depriving voters of genuinely informed choice, and Governor Gavin Newsom, who cited voter confusion and the need for

further research, also contribute to the broader discourse on the potential drawbacks of RCV.(4)

While RCV has its proponents who advocate for its potential benefits, including increased voter engagement and broader representation, the experiences in Australia and other jurisdictions, along with the concerns raised in the United States, underscore the importance of thoroughly examining the implications and challenges associated with adopting any new voting system.

As we rely on our legislatures to safeguard the integrity and fairness of our electoral processes, it is vital for them to conduct comprehensive research, learn from historical examples, and consider the potential consequences before making decisions that could impact the democratic process. As the case for rejecting ranked choice voting is examined, we must strive for a transparent and well-informed evaluation to ensure that any changes to our voting systems truly serve the interests of the people.

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Chapter 11:

Absolute Majority & Exhausted Ballots

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) has been promoted as a voting system that aims to achieve an "absolute majority" by ensuring that the winning candidate or option receives more than half of the total votes. However, there are several factors that raise concerns about whether RCV truly achieves this goal and represents the choice of all participating voters.

One issue that affects the attainment of an absolute majority in RCV is the inclusion of exhausted ballots. These are ballots that do not count towards the final tally in RCV elections. Even correctly filled-out ballots can be discarded if the ranked candidates are no longer in contention. As candidates are eliminated through successive rounds of tabulation, voters who only ranked candidates that have been eliminated may have their ballots exhausted. This means that for a voter's voice to be fully counted in every

round of an RCV election, they must rank all candidates on the ballot, even those they may not support. The exclusion of exhausted ballots can impact the overall distribution of votes and potentially skew the outcome.

The issue of ballot exhaustion raises questions about whether RCV accurately represents the preferences of all participating voters. While RCV claims to protect majority rule, it can create an artificial majority by eliminating the votes of the lowest-scoring candidates during successive tabulations. Elections conducted in Maine and Alaska, where RCV has been implemented, have found that a significant proportion of RCV victors did not win by a majority (50%+1) of the total votes cast. This raises doubts about the ability of RCV to truly achieve an absolute majority and accurately reflect the will of the electorate.

In addition to ballot exhaustion, errors such as duplicate votes, overvotes, and skipped ranks further impact the accuracy and inclusivity of RCV results. These errors can occur when voters mistakenly give multiple candidates the same rank, rank the same candidate multiple times, or leave gaps in their ranking. These errors introduce complexities and potential inconsistencies in the tabulation process, which can undermine the fairness and accuracy of the election outcomes.

Considering these factors, the claim that RCV achieves an "absolute majority" may be called into question. The inclusion of exhausted ballots, along with errors in the voting process, can affect the true representation of voter preferences and challenge the notion of achieving a clear majority in RCV elections. It is essential to carefully evaluate the implementation and potential drawbacks of RCV to ensure that it indeed fulfills its claims of promoting majority rule and accurately reflecting the will of the voters.

Ranked-choice voting (RCV) is promoted as a system that ensures an "absolute majority" by considering voter preferences through multiple rounds of tabulation. However, the inclusion of exhausted ballots, which are not counted towards the final tally, raises concerns about whether RCV truly achieves its intended goal. This section examines the issue of exhausted ballots in RCV and its potential impact on representation and voter participation. It also highlights specific examples from New York City and Alaska that shed light on this issue.

1. Exhausted Ballots in RCV:

Exhausted ballots refer to ballots that do not count towards the final vote tally in RCV elections. Even correctly filled-out ballots can be discarded if the ranked candidates are eliminated from contention. This exclusion of exhausted ballots can influence the distribution of votes and potentially skew the outcome of the election.

2. Representation Concerns in RCV:

The issue of ballot exhaustion raises questions about whether RCV accurately represents the preferences of all participating voters. Studies conducted in jurisdictions like Maine have found that a significant proportion of RCV victors did not win by a majority of the total votes cast. This raises doubts about the ability of RCV to achieve an absolute majority and accurately reflect the will of the electorate.

3. Errors and Inconsistencies in RCV:

Apart from exhausted ballots, errors such as duplicate votes, overvotes, and skipped ranks further impact the accuracy and inclusivity of RCV results. These errors can introduce complexities and potential inconsistencies in the tabulation process, undermining the fairness and accuracy of election outcomes.

Challenges in New York City and Alaska

Challenges in New York City:

During the initial implementation of RCV in New York City's 2021 Democratic primary elections, several challenges arose. Technical difficulties and miscounts led to confusion and delays in the tabulation process. Voter education efforts were criticized for inadequately providing information, potentially disenfranchising certain communities. Additionally, ballot design issues, such as

confusing layouts and unclear instructions, contributed to errors and invalidated ballots.

Voter Turnout Concerns in Alaska:

Alaska experienced historically low voter turnout, with only 44.38% participation in November 2022. While multiple factors contribute to low turnout, the inclusion of exhausted ballots and other challenges associated with RCV implementation raised concerns about the system's effectiveness and efficiency.

Evaluating RCV's Impact on Representation:

The occurrence of exhausted ballots in both New York City and Alaska underscores the need for a comprehensive evaluation of RCV's impact on representation and voter participation. It is crucial to address the complexities and potential pitfalls associated with the system to ensure that every vote truly matters and contributes to the democratic process.

Exhausted ballots present a significant challenge in the implementation of ranked-choice voting. The exclusion of these ballots raises concerns about representation and the accurate reflection of voter preferences. When combined with errors and inconsistencies in the voting process, the claim of achieving an "absolute majority" through RCV becomes questionable. It is essential to thoroughly examine the impact of exhausted ballots and other challenges

associated with RCV to refine the system, enhance its accuracy, and maintain trust in the democratic process.

Exhausted Ballots In Alaska

Impact of Exhausted Ballots and Voter Disenfranchisement in Alaska

The issue of exhausted ballots, where certain ballots do not contribute to the final vote tally, has been observed not only in Alaska but also in other jurisdictions that have implemented ranked-choice voting systems. The first ranked-choice primary in New York City in 2021 serves as a notable example, with a significant proportion of "exhausted" primary ballots, raising concerns about the system's effectiveness in accurately reflecting voter preferences.

The presence of exhausted ballots highlights a potential flaw in ranked-choice voting, where a substantial portion of voters' choices may not ultimately count towards the final outcome. This raises concerns about voter disenfranchisement and the dilution of individual voices in the electoral process.

When combined with examples from Alaska, where a notable percentage of votes in key races were discarded as non-transferable, the issue of exhausted ballots becomes even more significant. It points to a broader trend of voter

preferences not being adequately accounted for or accurately reflected in the final election outcomes.

The occurrence of exhausted ballots in both Alaska and New York City underscores the need for a comprehensive examination of the ranked-choice voting system and its potential impact on voter participation, comprehension, and the overall integrity of elections. It calls for a critical evaluation of the complexities and potential pitfalls associated with the system to ensure that every vote truly matters and contributes to the democratic process.

As jurisdictions continue to explore and implement ranked-choice voting, addressing the issue of exhausted ballots becomes crucial. It is important to develop solutions that minimize the occurrence of exhausted ballots and maximize the inclusion of voter preferences in the final election results. This necessitates ongoing research, public discourse, and a commitment to refining the ranked-choice voting system to enhance its accuracy, transparency, and ability to faithfully represent the will of the people.

Exhausted ballots in elections with ranked-choice voting have the potential to silence voters and undermine the principle of majority rule. It is essential to recognize this impact and strive for a voting system that truly represents the choice of all voters who participate, ensuring that their

voices are not disregarded or invalidated during the tabulation process.

Other Findings on Exhausted Ballots and Majority Winner Using Rank Choice Voting

"Too often, proponents of ballot initiatives advance lofty claims to win support at the ballot box."

"In examining 96 ranked-choice voting races from across the country where additional rounds of tabulation were necessary to declare a winner, The Maine Heritage Policy Center concludes that the eventual winner failed to receive a true majority 61% of the time.'

"the claim that ranked-choice voting always provides a majority winner ... is false and deserves further scrutiny from voters."

"While candidates sometimes do receive a majority of the total votes cast, a winner is often declared only after a large number of exhausted ballots have been removed from the final denominator."(1)

Maine Lack of Absolute Majority In Rank Choice Voting

One of the key claims made by proponents of ranked-choice voting is that candidates need to earn more than half of the votes to win. However, this assertion does not always hold

true in practice. An example from Maine's 2018 Second Congressional District election highlights this flaw.

Incumbent Bruce Poliquin won a plurality of 46.33 percent in the first round of voting. As ranked-choice voting was in effect, a second round of tabulation occurred because no candidate had obtained an absolute majority of the votes. In the second round, Jared Golden secured victory by obtaining enough votes from the eliminated candidates to surpass Poliquin's lead. However, despite the claim of a "majority" winner, Golden actually prevailed with only 49.18 percent of the total votes cast.

This lack of a true majority winner is evident in the distribution of votes and the phenomenon of ballot exhaustion. A significant number of ballots were exhausted during the reallocation of votes from eliminated candidates, which led to a winner being declared with less than 50 percent of the total votes cast.

Peer-reviewed research also supports the concern about the lack of a majority winner in ranked-choice voting. A 2014 study found that none of the winners in the examined elections obtained a true majority of the votes cast. An analysis of 96 ranked-choice voting races across the country, where additional rounds of tabulation were needed to declare a winner, revealed that 61 percent of the time, the eventual winner did not receive a true majority.

The claim that ranked-choice voting always produces a majority winner due to the requirement of earning more than 50 percent of the vote is therefore inaccurate and requires further scrutiny. While some candidates may indeed achieve a majority of the total votes cast, it is common for a winner to be declared after a substantial number of exhausted ballots have been excluded from the final calculation. This lack of an absolute majority is a crucial flaw in the ranked-choice voting system and warrants careful consideration by voters.

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Voting: An examination of four ranked-choice elections. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0261379414001395

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Chapter 12:

Is Ranked Choice Good For 3rd Parties?

The Impact of Ranked Choice Voting on Third-Party Candidates in Alaska and Maine

The presence of third-party candidates in elections has been a topic of interest, as they offer alternative choices beyond the two major parties. However, their success has often been limited in traditional voting systems. We examine the impact of ranked-choice voting (RCV) on third-party candidates, particularly in the context of Alaska and Maine. By analyzing election data from both states before and after the implementation of RCV, we aim to understand the influence of this voting method on the participation and success of third-party candidates.

Alaska's Journey with RCV and Third-Party Candidates:

The 2022 US Senate Election in Alaska marked the implementation of RCV alongside a top 4 general election format. This change coincided with the absence of third-party candidates who were present in previous elections. We explore the factors that may have influenced third-party candidates' decision not to run, considering the challenges they faced in securing one of the top four positions. Additionally, we assess the impact of RCV on third-party candidates' ability to compete effectively.

Maine's Experience with RCV and Third-Party Candidates:

In Maine, RCV has been in use since 2018, offering insights into the relationship between this voting method and the success of third-party candidates. By analyzing election data from 2012 to 2022, we examine whether RCV has provided third-party candidates with a more viable path to victory in Maine's state and federal elections. We compare the outcomes and trends before and after the implementation of RCV to gain a comprehensive understanding of its impact.

Comparing Alaska and Maine:

By comparing the experiences of Alaska and Maine, we can identify similarities and differences in the impact of RCV on third-party candidates. We explore factors such as the

specific RCV systems used, the number of available positions, and the dynamics of the political landscape in each state. Through this comparative analysis, we aim to provide a broader perspective on the influence of RCV on third-party candidates' participation and success.

The implementation of ranked-choice voting in Alaska and Maine has sparked interest in understanding its impact on third-party candidates. By examining the absence of third-party candidates in Alaska's 2022 US Senate Election and analyzing the experiences of Maine with RCV, We aim to shed light on the influence of this voting method. By gaining insights into the specificities of RCV systems and their consequences for third-party candidates, we can assess the potential for greater representation and inclusivity in future elections.

Examining the data from the Maine Senate and House of Representatives elections from 2016 to 2022, as well as the Alaska State Senate and House elections from 2020 to 2022, there is little evidence to suggest that RCV benefits third-party candidates. In the Maine Senate, there was an increase of 7 elected Democrats and a decrease of 7 elected Republicans, with no third-party candidates winning seats during this period. Similarly, in the Maine House of Representatives, there was an increase of 5 elected Democrats, a decrease of 5 elected Republicans, and a decrease of 1 elected Independent. These results indicate a

total loss of 12 Republicans and a gain of 12 Democrats, with no significant presence of third-party candidates.

In the Alaska State Senate elections from 2020 to 2022, there was a net increase of 2 Democrats and a net decrease of 2 Republicans, while the number of independent candidates remained unchanged. In the Alaska State House elections during the same period, there was a net decrease of 1 Democrat, no change in the number of Republicans, and an increase of 1 Independent candidate. These results suggest that RCV did not lead to significant changes in the representation of third-party candidates in the Alaska State Senate and House.

The combination of the Alaska and Maine data calls into question the assumption that RCV provides a boost to third-party candidates. While it is essential to consider the specific context of each election and voting system, the absence of third-party candidates in these elections suggests that RCV alone may not be sufficient to create a favorable environment for their success.

In addition to the data previously mentioned, it is worth noting that the introduction of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in certain elections coincided with seat flips to the Democratic Party. In the 2018 Maine US House Election, which marked the first year of using RCV, a seat was flipped to the Democratic Party. Similarly, in the 2022 Alaska House

Election, which also coincided with the first year of implementing RCV, a seat was flipped to the Democrats. These instances highlight specific races where RCV may have played a role in influencing the outcome and benefiting the Democratic Party.

When considering the overall impact of RCV on seat outcomes, it is essential to examine the broader picture. In the Maine State Legislature, a total of 12 Democrat seats were won during the specified period, indicating an increase in Democratic representation. Furthermore, two U.S. Congressional seats were won by Democrats in Maine, and two Alaska State Senate seats were also secured by Democrats. These victories suggest some level of success for the Democratic Party in these particular elections where RCV was utilized.

Ranked Choice Voting Impacts on Third-Party Candidates

Introduction:

Ranked-choice voting (RCV) is often seen as a potential solution to the limitations of plurality elections in stifling third-party involvement and restricting voter choice. Maine, with its strong independent streak, has embraced RCV in the hope of encouraging third-party participation. However, this paper argues that RCV may not necessarily improve the situation for third parties and can even perpetuate the two-party system.

The "Spoiler" Problem:

RCV proponents claim that it addresses the "spoiler" problem, where voters are hesitant to rank their favorite candidate first for fear of helping their least-favorite candidate win. While RCV offers some alleviation of this problem, it still doesn't entirely eliminate the concern. Voters may face dilemmas when ranking strong third-party candidates, potentially causing the elimination of their compromise candidate and enabling their least-favored candidate to win. Consequently, voters may still feel pressured not to rank their true favorite candidate first.

Loss of Third Parties' "Blackmail Power":

In the United States, third parties often wield influence not necessarily by winning seats but by shaping major party candidates' positions to cater to ideological minorities. However, RCV weakens this "blackmail power" of third parties. Under RCV, major party candidates can be confident of inheriting votes from ideologically-similar third-party candidates eliminated in earlier rounds of tabulation. This erodes third parties' strategic leverage in pushing major parties to adopt more moderate policies.

Impact on Third-Party Candidates:

Contrary to popular belief, RCV does not necessarily empower third-party candidates. Instead, it may hurt them by diminishing their ability to influence major-party candidates and promote their policy agendas. By reducing

the spoiler effect, RCV potentially narrows the window for third-party impact and can perpetuate the dominance of major parties in the political landscape.

Conclusion:

While RCV has been heralded as an electoral reform that promotes voter choice and inclusivity, its impact on third-party candidates warrants careful consideration. The system may not entirely solve the spoiler problem and can weaken third parties' leverage to shape major-party policies.

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Chapter 13:

Who is impacted disproportionately by Rank Choice Voting?

Elderly, ESL Voters, and First Time Voters, Young Voters are all impacted disproportionately by RCV.

Introducing a new voting system like ranked choice voting (RCV) can indeed pose challenges, particularly for certain segments of the population such as the elderly, first-time voters, and those with English as a second language. The transition to RCV may require additional efforts to ensure that all voters are adequately educated and informed about the new system to minimize any potential impact on their ability to participate effectively.

Here are a few factors to consider regarding the impact on specific groups:

1. Elderly Voters: Elderly voters, particularly those who have been accustomed to a different voting method for a long time, may require additional

support and education to understand and adapt to RCV. Clear instructions and accessible materials can help address any potential confusion or challenges they may face.

2. First-Time Voters: First-time voters, who may not have previous experience with any voting system, may need thorough education and guidance on how to navigate the RCV process. Voter education campaigns targeting first-time voters can play a crucial role in ensuring they understand the ranking system and how to cast their ballots effectively.

3. English as a Second Language Voters: Language barriers can present challenges for voters whose primary language is not English. Providing multilingual resources, translated materials, and language assistance at polling places can help ensure that all voters, regardless of their language proficiency, can understand and participate in the RCV process.

To address these concerns, comprehensive voter education campaigns, community outreach programs, and multilingual support can be implemented to ensure that all eligible voters are informed about the new voting system and have the resources they need to participate effectively. By proactively addressing these challenges, jurisdictions can

strive to minimize any potential disproportionate impact on specific groups and promote inclusivity in the electoral process.

Elderly

Ranked-choice voting presents a more complex decision-making process for voters, particularly for elders who may face challenges in navigating the system. Unlike in a plurality election where the choice is straightforward, ranked-choice voting requires voters to rank-order all candidates, which can be overwhelming for individuals, especially those who may not closely follow political races. This complexity becomes even more concerning when considering the impact on the elderly population.

In jurisdictions like Maine, where ranked-choice voting has been implemented, voter confusion has been observed, prompting the need for a 19-page instruction manual to assist voters. Such complexity poses a significant problem for elders who may already struggle with understanding the intricacies of the electoral process. Their limited familiarity with ranked-choice voting and the additional burden of ranking multiple candidates can create confusion and potentially discourage their participation.

Ranked-choice voting assumes that voters possess a substantial amount of information about candidates' differing views. However, research indicates that American

voters, including elders, often lack basic knowledge about candidates' policy positions. Studies conducted before the 2016 presidential election revealed a significant proportion of registered voters had limited awareness of where the major candidates stood on key issues. This lack of information extends to congressional races as well, with a notable number of registered voters not even knowing the names of their party's candidates in their districts.

Given these factors, ranked-choice voting can disproportionately burden elders, who may already face challenges in accessing and processing information about candidates. The requirement to rank multiple candidates without adequate knowledge can contribute to feelings of pressure or uncertainty when filling out ballots in ranked-choice elections. These challenges have been particularly evident in precincts with higher proportions of Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, and older voters, as well as more progressive precincts, where ballots containing overvotes were more likely to occur. Additionally, the 2022 Oakland, CA Mayoral election experienced confusion due to incorrect instructions on RCV ballots, with a significant number of overvoted ballots. The division in overvote rates closely aligns with the demographic division of Oakland, reflecting disparities between higher-income areas and lower-income areas.

House Speaker Kevin McCarthy expressed concerns about ranked-choice voting, stating, "Someone could get the most votes and not win! So if you come in 3rd, you win. What? 'I got a lot of second votes, I got a lot of 3rd votes — what does that mean?'" McCarthy's quote highlights the confusion and potential frustration that can arise from ranked-choice voting, where the candidate with the most first-place votes may not necessarily be the winner. This aspect of the system can be difficult for voters to comprehend and raises questions about the fairness and legitimacy of the process.

Representative Austin Smith of Arizona also voiced concerns, stating, "Between voter confusion, high rates of ballot exhaustion, and the difficulty of tabulating the results, Ranked-choice voting increases voter disenfranchisement, distrust in the process, and deters candidates from taking stances on issues important to every Arizonan." Smith's quote emphasizes the potential negative consequences of ranked-choice voting, including increased disenfranchisement, reduced trust in the electoral process, and a potential reluctance among candidates to address important issues.

In light of these concerns, it is essential to carefully consider the potential impact of ranked-choice voting on the elderly population and other vulnerable groups. Electoral systems should strive to promote inclusivity and facilitate

meaningful participation for all voters, ensuring that complexities and potential disparities do not disproportionately affect certain demographics, including our elderly citizens.

First Time Voters

First-time voters, including those in California, may face significant challenges and complexities when it comes to ranked-choice voting. Former California Governor Jerry Brown expressed his concerns, stating, "Ranked choice voting is overly complicated and confusing. I believe it deprives voters of genuinely informed choice."

In a traditional plurality system, the decision for first-time voters is straightforward - choosing a preferred candidate. However, ranked-choice voting requires voters to rank-order all candidates, which can be overwhelming and confusing, particularly for those who are new to the electoral process. Governor Brown's assertion that ranked-choice voting is overly complicated and confusing resonates with the experiences observed in jurisdictions where the system has been implemented.

The complexity of ranked-choice voting can be particularly challenging for first-time voters who may not have prior experience or familiarity with the intricacies of ranking multiple candidates. Governor Brown's concern about depriving voters of genuinely informed choice is significant.

It is essential for voters to have access to clear and understandable information about the candidates and their positions to make informed decisions. However, ranked-choice voting assumes that voters possess a substantial amount of information about candidates' differing views, which may not always be the case.

It is well-documented that American voters, including first-time voters, often lack basic knowledge about candidates' policy positions. Surveys conducted before the 2016 presidential election revealed that a significant proportion of registered voters had limited awareness of where the major candidates stood on key issues. This lack of information, coupled with the complexity of ranked-choice voting, can further contribute to confusion and the potential for uninformed choices.

Considering Governor Brown's concerns and the challenges faced by first-time voters, it becomes evident that ranked-choice voting can present additional difficulties. The requirement to rank multiple candidates and the lack of adequate information can lead to feelings of confusion and may ultimately deprive voters of a genuinely informed choice. It is crucial to address these concerns and evaluate the potential impact of ranked-choice voting on voters' ability to make informed decisions. By considering the perspectives of former Governor Jerry Brown and other stakeholders, California can ensure that its electoral systems

promote inclusivity and facilitate meaningful participation for all voters, including those who are casting their votes for the first time.

ESL Voters

Ranked-choice voting has received criticism from various quarters, including Nevada Governor Steve Sisolak, who stated, "We should be finding ways to continue our progress, not pushing a rushed constitutional change that would make our system more confusing, error-prone and exclusionary." This perspective raises concerns about the potential drawbacks of implementing ranked-choice voting.

Governor Sisolak's statement emphasizes the need for careful consideration and evaluation before making significant changes to the electoral system. Critics argue that rushing into the adoption of ranked-choice voting without proper planning and understanding of its implications could result in unintended negative consequences.

The concerns expressed by Governor Sisolak revolve around the potential complexities, errors, and exclusions that may arise from implementing ranked-choice voting. He suggests that the system could lead to confusion among voters, increasing the likelihood of errors in the ballot casting and counting process. There is a concern that certain individuals or communities may face barriers to participating

effectively in ranked-choice elections, leading to exclusionary outcomes.

These concerns warrant careful analysis and discussion to ensure that any proposed changes to the electoral system are thoroughly evaluated. It is essential to consider potential unintended consequences and implement adequate measures to address them. By engaging in thoughtful deliberation and seeking comprehensive solutions, policymakers can avoid rushed decisions that may have adverse effects on the integrity and inclusivity of the electoral process.

As debates on electoral reform continue, it is crucial to incorporate a wide range of perspectives and engage in a constructive dialogue that prioritizes the interests of all voters. By considering the concerns raised by critics like Governor Sisolak, policymakers can make informed decisions that strike a balance between progress and preserving the integrity of the electoral system.

Negative impact of ranked-choice voting on voters, particularly due to confusion and lack of information.

Ranked-choice voting (RCV) presents a more complex decision for voters compared to the simple choice in plurality elections. To participate fully, voters must rank all candidates, but many voters lack the necessary information

about candidates' views and policies. Maine's experience with RCV has shown widespread confusion among voters, leading to the publication of a 19-page instruction manual to help voters navigate the process.

The requirement to rank all candidates can be burdensome, especially in races with numerous contenders, resulting in a considerable percentage of exhausted ballots. Even knowledgeable voters may struggle to rank candidates confidently based on their platforms. Studies have revealed that American voters often lack basic information about candidates' policy positions, making it unlikely for them to confidently rank multiple candidates.

Less informed voters are more likely to rank fewer candidates, diminishing their electoral influence. Moreover, ranked-choice voting can lead to voter disenfranchisement, particularly affecting older voters and minority communities. Research has shown that older voters, African Americans, Latinos, voters with lower education, and non-English speakers are less likely to utilize their ballots to the fullest extent, resulting in more exhausted ballots.

While the rate of ballot exhaustion may decrease over time as voters become more accustomed to ranked-choice voting, evidence suggests that it consistently produces higher proportions of exhausted ballots compared to plurality elections. This confusion and complexity at the ballot box

raise concerns about the negative impact of ranked-choice voting on voter engagement and representation.

In conclusion, the sizable percentage of exhausted ballots and the difficulty for voters to navigate the ranked-choice voting process highlight the negative impact of RCV on voters. Policymakers should consider simplifying the voting process and promoting greater voter engagement to enhance the democratic electoral system.

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Chapter 14:

San Francisco 2002 The Beginning

Concerns with Ranked Choice Voting from San Francisco before they voted for it. "Instant Runoff Responding to low voter turnout in the December 2000 run-off election, the majority of the Board of Supervisors placed Proposition A on the ballot. Unfortunately, Proposition A is not reform but a return to the days of power brokers and back-room deals. Proposition A is brought to you by the same people who proposed "Preference Voting" which was resoundingly defeated by San Francisco voters in 1996. They have relabeled their flawed product "Instant Run-off Voting", and have convinced the Board of Supervisors on its "merits" by arguing that "IRV" will reduce the cost to taxpayers and eliminate negative campaigning. What they don't say is that Proposition A will enrich for-profit slate card organizations, increase the cost of campaigns, reduce meaningful debate on issues and hide ideological differences, and effectively disenfranchise language minorities and people with limited

education. Rather than have the majority rule, Proposition A could actually reduce the actual number of voters who decide elections to a smaller portion than currently go to the polls in run-off elections. So, how do we address low voter turnout in December run-off elections? There are several alternatives that the Board of Supervisors should have entertained. First, move the primary for District Supervisors to March in even-numbered years, when city voters decide the nominees for State and Federal offices, and hold the run-off election in the high-voter turnout General Election in November. Second, move the primary in odd-numbered years, to the Tuesday eight days or fifteen days after Labor Day in September, and hold the run-off election in November. Third, move the primary in odd-numbered years to the week-end or second weekend after Labor Day when most people aren't working. There's better ways to reform the system. Vote No on Proposition A Christopher L. Bowman Member Citizens Advisory Committee on Elections, 1993-2001"(1)

Arguments Against Proposition A

Instant Runoff Responding to low voter turnout in the December 2000 run-off election, the majority of the Board of Supervisors placed Proposition A on the ballot. Unfortunately, Proposition A is not reform but a return to the days of power brokers and back-room deals. Proposition A is brought to you by the same people who proposed "Preference Voting" which was resoundingly defeated by San Francisco voters in 1996. They have relabeled their flawed product "Instant Run-off Voting", and have convinced the Board of Supervisors on its "merits" by arguing that "IRV" will reduce the cost to taxpayers and eliminate negative campaigning. What they don't say is that Proposition A will enrich for-profit slate card organizations, increase the cost of campaigns, reduce meaningful debate on issues and hide ideological differences, and effectively disenfranchise language minorities and people with limited education. Rather than have the majority rule, Proposition A could actually reduce the actual number of voters who decide elections to a smaller portion than currently go to the polls in run-off elections. So, how do we address low voter turnout in December run-off elections? There are several alternatives that the Board of Supervisors should have entertained. First, move the primary for District Supervisors to March in even-numbered years, when city voters decide the nominees for State and Federal offices, and hold the run-off election in the high-voter turnout General Election in November. Second, move the primary in odd-numbered years, to the Tuesday eight days or fifteen days after Labor Day in September, and hold the run-off election in November. Third, move the primary in odd-numbered years to the week-end or second weekend after Labor Day when most people aren't working. There's better ways to reform the system. Vote No on Proposition A.

Christopher L. Bowman Member Citizens Advisory Committee on Elections, 1993-2001

Concerns Surrounding Ranked Choice Voting in California and San Francisco(1)

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) has been a subject of debate and controversy in California, particularly in San Francisco, before it was implemented. The proposal for Instant Runoff Voting (IRV), later rebranded as RCV, was met with skepticism by some officials and citizens alike.

In December 2000, a run-off election in San Francisco saw low voter turnout, prompting the majority of the Board of Supervisors to place Proposition A on the ballot. However, critics argued that Proposition A was not genuine reform but a step backward, resembling the days of power brokers and back-room deals. The same individuals who had previously proposed "Preference Voting," a system defeated by San Francisco voters in 1996, now introduced "Instant Run-off Voting" under a new name.(1)

Critics of Proposition A contended that the so-called merits of IRV, such as reducing the cost to taxpayers and eliminating negative campaigning, were misleading. They argued that it would actually enrich for-profit slate card organizations, increase campaign costs, hinder meaningful debates on issues, and potentially disenfranchise language minorities and those with limited education. Furthermore, there were concerns that Proposition A might reduce the actual number of voters deciding elections, leading to a smaller portion of the population participating in run-off elections.(1)

Former California Governor Jerry Brown expressed his doubts about ranked choice voting, describing it as "overly complicated and confusing." He believed that RCV deprived voters of "genuinely informed choices."(2)

Similarly, current Governor Gavin Newsom vetoed Senate Bill 212, which would have authorized general law cities, counties, and school districts to conduct local elections using ranked choice voting. Governor Newsom cited concerns about voter confusion and the need to learn from charter cities that had already experimented with RCV before expanding the system broadly. In his veto message, he stated, "I am concerned that it has often led to voter confusion, and that the promise that ranked choice voting leads to greater democracy is not necessarily fulfilled."(3)

Even Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy expressed skepticism about RCV, questioning the possibility of a candidate winning despite not receiving the most votes. He highlighted the potential confusion in the system, where a candidate who comes in third could still emerge as the winner. "Someone could get the most votes, and not win!" said McCarthy. "So if you come in 3rd, you win. What? 'I got a lot of second votes, I got a lot of 3rd vote — what does that mean?'"(4)(5)

In summary, the introduction and implementation of ranked choice voting in California, particularly in San Francisco, were met with reservations and doubts. Concerns ranged from voter confusion to potential disenfranchisement and the need for further evaluation before expanding the system. While some advocate for electoral reform, it remains essential to address these concerns and thoroughly examine the impact of ranked choice voting on the democratic process.

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Chapter 15:

Aspen (2009) & Boulder (2023)

Aspen

Problems with Instant Runoff Voting in Aspen

Aspen, Colorado, implemented Instant Runoff Voting (IRV), a type of Ranked Choice Voting, in 2009. However, the system faced significant issues that led to confusion among voters, ballot problems, and challenges with tabulation. This resulted in a decision to repeal IRV and return to the plurality voting method.

During the election, voters were asked to rank the four mayoral candidates and nine council candidates in order of preference. This process proved to be confusing for many voters, leading to a significant increase in spoiled ballots. City Clerk Kathryn Koch reported that there were 168 spoiled ballots, a stark contrast to the typical number of 2.

The confusion and challenges with the IRV system prompted residents to reconsider its implementation. In a referendum held in November 2010, Aspen residents were

asked if they wanted to reinstate the voting method used before IRV. The majority of voters, 65.3 percent (1,654 voters), expressed their desire to end IRV and return to the previous system, while 34.7 percent (880 voters) wanted to keep it.

Proponents of repealing IRV argued that the system was flawed and susceptible to "non-monotonicity," a mathematical phenomenon that could result in a candidate with fewer votes winning the election. Critics contended that the IRV method did not live up to its promise of achieving a true majority for the winning candidate.

As a result of the confusion and concerns surrounding IRV, Aspen made the decision to abandon it and revert to the traditional runoff system. This choice was driven by the belief that the runoff system provided a better opportunity for voters to get to know the candidates and make informed decisions. Today, Aspen utilizes plurality voting for its elections, leaving behind the complexities and challenges associated with IRV.

According to the same news report from The Aspen Times on November 3, 2010, critics of IRV argued that the method was flawed and more prone to "non-monotonicity," a mathematical phenomenon that can lead a candidate with fewer votes to win.

In Aspen, Colorado (2009) there were significant problems with how Instant Run Off Voting, a type of Ranked Choice Voting, worked. People were confused by the process, the ballots, and the tabulation. They originally voted 70% to get Instant Run Off Voting. After one election they voted 65% to go back to the plurality voting method, Today Aspen uses plurality voting for their elections. Why did they vote to repeal instant runoff voting?

In Aspen, Colorado, instant runoff voting (IRV), a type of Ranked Choice Voting, was adopted in 2009 but repealed in 2010. While the specific reasons for the repeal in Aspen may require a deeper analysis of the local context, including public debates and official statements, there are common factors that can contribute to the reversal of a voting system change:

1. Voter Discontent: Some voters may have been dissatisfied with the implementation or outcomes of IRV in the 2009 elections. Concerns about the complexity of the system, confusion among voters, or unintended consequences can lead to a push for repeal.

   According to a local news report from The Aspen Times on May 6, 2009, the runoff ballots used in the election were found confusing by voters, resulting

in a significant increase in spoiled ballots compared to previous elections.

2. Lack of Consensus: The adoption of a new voting system can be contentious, with different factions holding varying opinions. If there was a lack of consensus or ongoing debates regarding the effectiveness or fairness of IRV, it might have influenced the decision to repeal it.The same news report from The Aspen Times on November 3, 2010, mentioned that a referendum was held asking Aspen residents if they wanted to reinstate the voting method used prior to instant runoff (IRV). The majority of voters, 65.3 percent, voted in favor of repealing IRV.

3. Political or Practical Considerations: Political factors, such as changes in the composition of the governing body or shifts in public opinion, can also play a role in repealing a voting system. Additionally, practical challenges in implementing IRV, such as technical difficulties, cost concerns, or administrative burdens, may have influenced the decision to repeal.

Local News- Janet Urquhart The Aspen Times May 6, 2009

"Aspen chose a mayor and two City Council members Tuesday in an election that left plenty of voters confused at the polls and equally mystified as the ballots were tallied in televised proceedings late into the evening. Voters apparently found the runoff ballots which asked them to rank the four mayoral candidates and nine council candidates in order of preference confusing. There were 168 spoiled ballots Tuesday; two is typical (84X Increase in Spoiled ballots), said City Clerk Kathryn Koch."

Aaron Hedge The Aspen Times Nov 3, 2010

"Our traditional runoff system really gives us a chance to get to know our candidates better," Marilyn Marks "Referendum 2B asked Aspen residents if they wanted to reinstate the voting method the city used prior to instant runoff (IRV), and they said yes. Of the 2,534 voters who weighed in on the issue, 1,654, or 65.3 percent, said IRV should go, while 880, or 34.7 percent of voters, said they wanted to keep it." "IRV was approved by Aspen voters in November 2007, after a campaign for the method established it as one that would save government money by not requiring the expensive runoff, while still achieving a true majority for the winning candidate. But critics have said the method is flawed because, they say, it is more prone to "non-monotonicity," a mathematical phenomenon that

can cause a candidate who received fewer votes than other candidates to win."

The Journey of Ranked Choice Voting: Learning from Aspen and San Francisco

In 2009, Aspen, Colorado, embraced Instant Runoff Voting (IRV), a type of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV), with the aim of enhancing its democratic election process. However, the new system faced numerous challenges that resulted in confusion among voters and concerns over its fairness and effectiveness. After just one election, Aspen residents decided to repeal IRV and return to the traditional plurality voting method.

One of the primary issues encountered during the 2009 election was the complexity of the IRV system, leaving many voters bewildered. The runoff ballots, which required ranking candidates in order of preference, led to an alarming 84-fold increase in spoiled ballots compared to previous elections. City Clerk Kathryn Koch reported a staggering 168 spoiled ballots, whereas only two were typical in the past.

The lack of consensus and ongoing debates on the effectiveness of IRV also contributed to the decision to repeal the system. A referendum held in November 2010 asked Aspen residents whether they wanted to reinstate the voting method used before IRV. A majority of 65.3 percent

voted in favor of repealing IRV, expressing their dissatisfaction with the system.

Critics of IRV argued that it was flawed and susceptible to "non-monotonicity," a mathematical phenomenon that could result in a candidate with fewer votes winning the election. They contended that IRV failed to deliver its promise of achieving a true majority for the winning candidate.

Moreover, the traditional runoff system was preferred by residents because it allowed voters to get to know the candidates better, leading to a fairer and more informed decision-making process.

The concerns raised during Aspen's IRV experiment are reminiscent of San Francisco's experience before adopting Ranked Choice Voting. In 2002, low voter turnout in a run-off election prompted the Board of Supervisors to place Proposition A on the ballot. However, the proposal, labeled as "Instant Runoff Voting," faced significant opposition. Critics argued that the reform was not genuine and could lead to unintended consequences, including potential disenfranchisement of certain groups.

The history of RCV adoption in various U.S. cities highlights the need for thorough research and understanding of the voting system's implications. Advocates for RCV must address the potential issues and

challenges that may arise, ensuring that voters are fully informed about the changes being proposed.

Aspen's journey with IRV serves as a valuable lesson for legislatures across the country. They must be proactive and accountable, ensuring that voting system changes are thoroughly researched and that the interests of their constituents are prioritized. By learning from past experiences and taking responsibility for informed decisions, legislatures can protect the democratic integrity of their communities.

Boulder

In the recent Boulder city election, Bob Yates, a former Republican who became unaffiliated in May 2022, initially led in the mayoral race. However, the introduction of ranked choice voting shifted the results. Incumbent Mayor Aaron Brockett, a liberal Democrat, overtook Yates with a lead of 497 votes and is expected to win. This shift is attributed to the second-choice votes from Nicole Speer's supporters, who finished third. Speer was endorsed by the local Democratic Socialists of America chapter. This election demonstrated the significant impact of ranked choice voting, which pushed Boulder's municipal politics further to the left. Yates, known for his limits on development and growth, had previously won more votes in the 2015 and 2019 council elections than Brockett. Brockett acknowledged that ranked choice voting was a key factor in

his likely victory, differentiating it from a plurality winner system. (4)

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Chapter 16:

San Francisco (2010 - 2011)

2010 San Francisco –

The Truth Behind Ranked Choice Voting: Absolute Majority and Exhausted Ballots

In the world of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV), there's a claim that it ensures an absolute majority, implying that the winning candidate surpasses the 50% threshold of total votes. However, let's delve deeper into this notion and examine a real-world example from San Francisco's 2010 election.

In the San Francisco Consolidated General Election, 21 candidates vied for victory through 19 rounds of ranked choice voting. Eventually, Malia Cohen emerged as the winner. While the claim was that she secured an absolute majority, the reality tells a different story.

Malia Cohen obtained 21% of the total votes, which is far below the half mark of 50%. How then did she become the

winner? This is where the concept of exhausted ballots comes into play. As the RCV process unfolded, some ballots were eliminated or transferred, leading to the exhaustion of certain votes. These exhausted ballots, unfortunately, no longer contributed to determining the final outcome.

The inclusion of exhausted ballots alters the playing field. In this context, claiming an absolute majority becomes somewhat misleading. While Malia Cohen may have been declared the winner, the true support of more than half of the total voters remains unattainable due to exhausted ballots.

In essence, RCV's ability to guarantee an absolute majority becomes questionable when factoring in exhausted ballots. Although it presents a unique approach to elections, it may not always deliver the straightforward majority that some claim it does.

An absolute majority, in its truest sense, signifies a winning candidate or option that receives more than half of the total votes. As voters and decision-makers, understanding this concept is crucial to make informed choices and ensure fair and accurate representation.

In conclusion, while Ranked Choice Voting offers an innovative method of election, we must remain aware of the complexities it brings, including exhausted ballots, which may affect the attainment of an absolute majority. Being

informed about the implications of voting systems is essential in upholding the principles of democracy.

2011 San Francisco -

Based on the information provided, states should exercise skepticism when considering the implementation of ranked-choice voting (RCV). The observed patterns of mistakes on the ballot and overvotes, particularly in precincts with higher proportions of Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, and older voters, raise concerns about the suitability of RCV for these demographic groups. Additionally, the finding that precincts with higher concentrations of older voters, moderate voters, Latino, and Asian and Pacific Islander voters were more likely to vote for only one candidate instead of utilizing the full ranking system suggests a potential lack of understanding or comfort with the complexity of RCV. These factors, combined with the potential for discrepancies in voter behavior based on the Progressive Voter Index, indicate that the implementation of RCV may not be uniformly effective or accessible across diverse communities and political affiliations. Therefore, states should carefully consider these demographic and behavioral dynamics and thoroughly evaluate the implications of implementing RCV before making any decisions.

“More specifically, precincts with higher proportions of Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, and older voters were

disproportionately likely to make mistakes on the ballot. And more progressive precincts, as measured by the Progressive Voter Index, were also more likely to have ballots containing overvotes. Precincts with higher concentrations of older voters, moderate voters, Latino, and Asian and Pacific Islander voters were more likely to vote for only one candidate rather than ranking up to the three allowable preferences."

Ranked Choice Voting in the 2011 San Francisco Municipal Election Final Report

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Chapter 17:

Maine (2018)

History of RCV In Maine –

A Brief History of Ranked-Choice Voting in Maine:

1. LD 1714: In 2001, the first bill proposing an instant run-off system or ranked-choice voting was introduced in the Maine legislature (120th Legislature). However, it was defeated.

2. Feasibility Study (2005): During the 121st Maine Legislature, lawmakers directed the Secretary of State to conduct a feasibility study on instant run-off elections. The report concluded that further study was needed before implementing the voting method.

3. Additional Bills (2005-2013): Several bills proposing an instant run-off system were introduced between 2005 and 2013, but none passed the legislature.

4. Ballot Initiative (2016): Ranked-choice voting proponents collected signatures for an initiative that

appeared on the 2016 ballot. Maine voters approved the initiative, allowing voters to rank their choices in various elections.

5. Constitutional Concerns: After the initiative's approval, constitutional concerns were raised about its changes to how elections would be decided. In response, the Maine Supreme Judicial Court issued an advisory opinion stating that ranked-choice voting was incompatible with the Maine Constitution for state-level general election races.

6. Legislative Intervention: In October 2017, the legislature passed LD 1646, seeking to delay the implementation of ranked-choice voting until 2021 and repeal the system unless the Maine Constitution was amended to comply with the original language of the 2016 initiative.

7. People's Veto (2018): Proponents of ranked-choice voting collected signatures for a People's Veto to overturn parts of LD 1646, allowing it to apply only to primary elections and federal offices. The People's Veto succeeded at the ballot box in June 2018.

8. Current Status: Maine currently utilizes ranked-choice voting for all federal and primary elections, except presidential elections. Proposals to amend the Maine

Constitution to apply ranked-choice voting to all state-level elections have not been successful so far.

Ongoing Debate: The State of Maine faces the decision of whether to change the Maine Constitution to apply ranked-choice voting to all state-level elections, maintain the current system, or repeal the new voting method altogether. The future of ranked-choice voting in Maine remains uncertain.

Implementation -

A study conducted in Maine examined the claim that RCV would lead to more civil campaigns by incentivizing candidates to seek second-place votes. The findings of this study cast doubt on the claim and raise concerns about the impact of RCV on campaign behavior.

The study employed a difference-in-differences analysis of independent expenditures for and against candidates. The analysis revealed a significant increase in negative spending following the implementation of RCV in Maine. This finding contradicts the expectation that RCV would promote more civil campaigns.

To further assess the impact on campaign civility, the study created a dataset of Facebook advertisements mentioning congressional candidates during the first year RCV was used in Maine. A sentiment analysis was conducted to determine the sentiment of each advertisement, specifically whether it

was negative or not. Using genetic matching to approximate an experiment, the study compared the 2018 campaign in Maine to paired districts across the country. Surprisingly, the analysis indicated that the 2018 campaign in Maine was even more negative than in the paired districts.

These findings raise concerns about the impact of RCV on campaign behavior and the claim that it would foster more civil campaigns. The increase in negative spending and the heightened negativity observed in Maine's 2018 campaign suggest that RCV may not necessarily lead to the desired outcomes.

Considering the controversies and challenges associated with RCV in Maine, along with the research findings regarding its impact on campaigns, states should approach the implementation of RCV with caution. A comprehensive evaluation of its potential consequences, including the potential for increased negativity in campaigns, is necessary before adopting RCV as a voting method.

Lawsuit

Four Mainers have filed a federal lawsuit challenging the use of ranked-choice voting in Maine's 2020 general election, arguing that it disenfranchises voters whose ballots are eliminated before the final round of tabulation. They seek to have Maine's law declared unconstitutional and to prevent ranked-choice voting from being used in the

November election. Ranked-choice voting allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference, and if no candidate receives a majority in the first round, the ranked preferences are used to determine the winner. Despite being affirmed by Maine voters twice before, the lawsuit claims that the system forces voters to rank candidates they would not support and that incomplete ballots were not counted in the final tally in 2018.

Governor Gavin Newsom of California has expressed concerns about ranked-choice voting, stating, "Ranked choice is an experiment that has been tried in several charter cities in California. Where it has been implemented, I am concerned that it has often led to voter confusion, and that the promise that ranked choice voting leads to greater democracy is not necessarily fulfilled. The state would benefit from learning more from charter cities who use ranked choice voting before broadly expanding the system."

Governor Charlie Baker of Massachusetts echoes these concerns, emphasizing the need to avoid complicating the voting process, saying, "I don't want to overly complicate that process to such an extent that people start to wonder, you know, what is it that's actually going on here."

Former California Governor Jerry Brown has criticized ranked-choice voting, stating, "Ranked choice voting is

overly complicated and confusing. I believe it deprives voters of genuinely informed choice."

These statements highlight the reservations and skepticism expressed by some governors regarding ranked-choice voting. However, it is important to note that supporters of ranked-choice voting argue that it promotes fair representation and prevents candidates from winning despite being opposed by a majority of voters. The outcome of the lawsuit will ultimately determine the future of ranked-choice voting in Maine's elections.

Section 2:

Republicans, from Augusta to Washington, are targeting ranked-choice voting (RCV) as a major concern. GOP leaders, including U.S. House Representative Kevin McCarthy, argue that Democrats manipulate elections using RCV, citing the defeat of Republican U.S. Representative Bruce Poliquin in a ranked-choice race. McCarthy stated, "In Maine, they changed how you vote in federal offices. Poliquin won his bid for re-election, but at the end of the day he lost because he didn't get to 50 percent, so the person who came in fourth, their number dropped off and whoever they voted for second got the extra vote." However, Golden won because he had more support among voters who picked independent candidates in the first round. Maine Republicans have introduced bills to stymie or eliminate RCV, while Democrats have

proposed extending its use. RCV is currently allowed only in federal elections and state primary races due to a provision in the state's constitution. Lawmakers will be discussing various proposals in the coming weeks. The next use of RCV in Maine would likely be in U.S. Senate or congressional primaries in 2020.

The Reality of Ranked Choice Voting: A Closer Look at Maine's Experience

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) has been hailed by some as a potential solution to the issues of polarization and negative campaigning in elections. Proponents argue that RCV offers voters more options and reduces the influence of extreme candidates. However, a closer examination of its implementation in Maine reveals some paradoxical effects and questions the claims made by its advocates.

Comparing Election Outcomes in Maine:

One of the key aspects of RCV is the promise of producing different electoral outcomes compared to traditional plurality elections. However, in the 2018 elections in Maine, only three out of several elections triggered RCV tabulation. Surprisingly, only the general election for the Second Congressional District resulted in an outcome different from a plurality election. This casts doubt on the notion that RCV consistently yields diverse results.

Voter Turnout and Engagement:

Another argument in favor of RCV is its potential to increase voter engagement, particularly among voters of color. Unfortunately, there is little evidence to support this claim. Studies report that RCV decreases turnout and the use of ranking opportunities among African Americans, while whites are more likely to rank multiple candidates. Overall, RCV has not shown a significant impact on voter engagement compared to traditional systems.

Paradoxical Effects of RCV:

One of the primary claims for RCV is that it fosters civility among candidates by encouraging positive appeals. However, it exhibits non-monotonicity, a fundamental metric used to evaluate voting systems. Non-monotonicity means that more first-place votes can harm, rather than help, a candidate, leading to counterintuitive outcomes. For instance, a candidate who is preferred in head-to-head races can lose the election via RCV.

Jurisdictions that Repealed RCV:

Several jurisdictions have experimented with RCV, only to later repeal the voting system. In Burlington, Vermont, Ann Arbor, Michigan, the State of North Carolina, Aspen, Colorado, and Pierce County, Washington, RCV was tested but ultimately rejected by voters due to various concerns. This indicates that RCV may not always live up to its promises in practice.

Conclusion:

While RCV advocates may argue that it brings positive changes to elections, Maine's experience and examples from other jurisdictions raise concerns about the system's effectiveness and potential drawbacks. The promise of increased civility and voter engagement under RCV needs to be critically examined, considering its potential unintended consequences. As the discussion around electoral reform continues, it is crucial to consider the evidence and carefully weigh the benefits and drawbacks of implementing ranked choice voting.

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Chapter 18:

Massachusetts (2020)

Wealthy Donors Fund Massachusetts Ranked-Choice Voting Proposal

A proposal to implement ranked-choice voting (RCV) in Massachusetts is largely funded by wealthy out-of-state donors, according to campaign finance data. Question 2 on the November ballot seeks to replace the winner-take-all elections with a ranked-choice system for congressional, state, and municipal elections. The RCV system allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference in case no candidate receives more than 50% of the vote.

Supporters of ranked-choice voting have raised over $3.1 million, with more than two-thirds of the funds coming from the Action Now Initiative, financed by billionaire Texas couple John and Laura Arnold. The committee has also received $100,000 from Jonathan Soros, son of billionaire philanthropist George Soros. On the other hand,

opponents of the proposal, represented by the No on 2 committee, have only received a single contribution of $250 from the Westford Republican Town Committee.

Supporters argue that ranked-choice voting provides more options for voters and ensures winning candidates have broad support, leading to increased diversity in government and reduced polarization in campaigns. However, opponents claim that the system is confusing and may lead to less engaging contests where candidates avoid controversial topics to avoid alienating potential supporters.

Massachusetts voters appear to be evenly split on the use of ranked-choice voting, with 36% in favor and 36% against, according to a MassINC Polling survey in August. Maine is currently the only state to have broadly adopted ranked-choice voting, and the upcoming November presidential election will use the system in the state.

Both sides are gearing up for a significant battle over the proposed change to the state's electoral system, with proponents emphasizing support from grassroots donors and backers of the system's potential to strengthen democracy, and opponents questioning the influence of out-of-state billionaires and the complexity of the ranked-choice voting process.

Massachusetts Ranked-Choice Voting Ballot Initiative Fails

The ranked-choice voting (RCV) ballot initiative in Massachusetts was defeated by approximately 10 percentage points, according to Associated Press returns. Despite a well-financed campaign with thousands of volunteers, the proposed change to the state's election system may have appeared too confusing to voters, leading them to stick with the familiar status quo. Political scientists suggest that the lack of experience with ranked-choice voting among voters and the absence of in-person community forums due to the pandemic contributed to the lack of understanding and acceptance of the proposal.

Opponents of the ballot initiative, led by former Massachusetts secretary of state candidate Anthony Amore, argued that ranked-choice voting would add complexity and costs to the state's election system without achieving the promised reduction of money in politics. The campaign against the measure was vastly outspent by the proponents, who raised nearly $10 million, primarily from out-of-state contributors. However, the significant financial support for the proposal did not resonate with voters, and the promise of getting money out of politics seemed incongruous to some.

Governor Charlie Baker cited concerns about increased election costs and complications in the election process as

reasons for opposing the ballot question. Proponents of ranked-choice voting highlighted the strong support they received during the campaign, with over 128,000 signatures gathered to place the question on the ballot and 7,400 volunteers involved in the movement to strengthen democracy.

In the end, despite the effort and financial resources poured into the campaign for ranked-choice voting, the ballot initiative did not gain enough voter support to pass, leaving the traditional election system unchanged in Massachusetts.

2023:

In the 2020 Massachusetts elections, 80% of cities and towns and 55% of voters rejected a ranked choice voting ballot proposition. Despite advocates spending over $10 million over two years in support of the measure, it was overshadowed by opponents' expenditure of $8,500 in the final 45 days. Only 16.3% of funds backing the proposition came from Massachusetts donors, with major contributors like Kathryn Murdoch, Jonathan Soros, and John Arnold's nonprofit from Houston. Advocates, mostly from out-of-state including an Oregon-based organization, are aiming for another shot at the ballot for the 2024 elections and have submitted three draft propositions for review.

The attorney general's decision on which can proceed is due on September 6, after which there's a requirement to collect about 76,000 signatures by November. The Fiscal Alliance Foundation has raised concerns about the legality of these proposed ballots. They argue that the same policy cannot be proposed in two consecutive election cycles, meaning the earliest it could be presented again would be 2026.

The foundation also highlights that the new question is very similar to the 2020 one and that it tries to alter several policies in one go, which goes against the state constitution's related subjects requirement. The foundation stands firm that it would be illegal to move forward with the ballot and vows to protect voters from such violations. Paul Diego Craney represents the Fiscal Alliance Foundation. (3)

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Chapter 19:

New York City & New Jersey (2021 -2023)

New York City faced challenges during the initial implementation of ranked-choice voting (RCV) in the 2021 Democratic primary elections. These challenges included tabulation delays, voter education and outreach concerns, and ballot design issues. The tabulation process experienced technical difficulties and miscounts, leading to confusion and delays. Voter education efforts were criticized for not providing sufficient information, potentially disenfranchising certain communities. Ballot design problems, such as confusing layouts and unclear instructions, contributed to errors and invalidated ballots.

To address these challenges, efforts are underway to improve RCV implementation in New York City. Focus areas include better training for poll workers, clearer ballot designs, and enhanced voter education campaigns. Despite these challenges, proponents of RCV argue that it can elect

less extreme candidates and restore faith in democracy. Critics, however, raise concerns about the system's flaws, including discarded ballots, violations of the "One person, one vote" principle, and perceptions of a rigged voting process.

Similar issues with RCV have been observed in other jurisdictions, leading to concerns about its impact on democracy and trust in elections. The problems include wrong announcements of winners, discarded ballots in races, popular candidates losing, and confusion among voters. Delays in determining outcomes fuel fears of fraud, corruption, and bureaucratic incompetence.

In the first citywide ranked-choice primary in New York City, nearly 15% of the ballots were deemed inactive or exhausted, with 140,202 voters not selecting the final two candidates in their ranking. Analysis is needed to understand the reasons behind exhausted ballots, such as selecting only one candidate or facing challenges due to the learning curve of the new voting system.

Proponents argue that more insights will emerge once the full cast-vote record is available, while detractors claim insufficient public education and discourage ranking more than one candidate. Some candidates who embraced RCV strategies found success by reaching out to diverse communities and building relationships.

In the ranked-choice process, multiple rounds of counting occurred until only two candidates remained, and a certain number of inactive or exhausted ballots were recorded. These ballots did not select one of the final two candidates as part of their ranking and did not contribute to the totals for the final two candidates.

Issues with Ranked-Choice Voting in New York: A Critical Analysis

Introduction:

Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV) has gained traction in various states as a potential solution to address the limitations of traditional plurality elections. However, New York City's recent implementation of RCV in 2021 has brought to light several concerning issues. This section of the research paper aims to explore the problems associated with RCV in New York City, shedding light on its potential drawbacks and implications for future electoral reforms.

Complexity and Voter Confusion:

One of the primary issues with RCV in New York City is its inherent complexity. Unlike the straightforward plurality system, where voters simply choose their preferred candidate, RCV requires voters to rank all candidates from most to least preferred. This added layer of decision-making can overwhelm voters, leading to confusion and uncertainty about the process. The requirement to rank all candidates further exacerbates the problem, as voters who fail to do so

risk having their votes invalidated. Consequently, many New Yorkers felt disenfranchised, unsure about how to navigate this new voting system.

Disenfranchisement and Vote Trashing:

During the 2021 mayoral primary in New York City, a significant number of ballots were invalidated due to vote trashing. Over 140,000 ballots, nearly 15% of the total cast, were effectively discarded because voters did not rank enough candidates for their votes to advance to the final round. This disenfranchisement of a substantial portion of voters raises questions about the legitimacy and fairness of RCV. The system should be designed to maximize voter participation and representation, not to exclude a significant segment of the electorate.

Delayed Election Outcomes and Errors:

Another concerning aspect of RCV in New York City was the delayed election outcome. Due to the complicated process of redistributing votes after multiple rounds of counting, it took nearly a month to certify the mayoral primary results. The inclusion of incorrect ballots in the counting process added to the confusion and raised doubts about the accuracy of the results. Such delays and errors erode public trust in the electoral process and create an environment ripe for skepticism and suspicion.

Popularity Does Not Ensure Victory:

Contrary to the proponents' claims that RCV would lead to the election of less "extreme" candidates, New York City's experience suggests otherwise. The candidate with the most first-choice votes did not automatically win the mayoral primary. Instead, after multiple rounds of redistributing votes, the ultimate winner emerged with only 49.18% of the total votes cast. This raises concerns about the legitimacy of the elected candidates, as it is possible for candidates who did not receive the most first-choice votes to be declared the winner, potentially leading to a perceived lack of accountability in the electoral process.

Conclusion:

The implementation of Ranked-Choice Voting in New York City has revealed several issues that warrant careful consideration before its broader adoption. The complexities of the system, voter confusion, disenfranchisement, delayed outcomes, and potential inaccuracies are significant challenges that may undermine the fundamental principles of democracy and public trust in elections. Policymakers must critically assess the drawbacks of RCV and engage in evidence-based discussions to make informed decisions on electoral reforms for a fair and representative democratic process.

The recent mayoral election debacle in New York City has cast a shadow of doubt on the effectiveness of ranked-

choice voting (RCV). While the fumble by the city Board of Elections was not directly related to RCV, it has drawn new scrutiny to the complexity of the system. Despite New York's struggles, proponents of RCV are eager to maintain momentum, as the system has gained popularity in various states and cities.

Advocates and experts assert that the New York incident should not be taken as a reflection of the potential success of RCV in other jurisdictions. They argue that the issues in New York were not specific to the system itself and could have happened in any election. However, concerns remain, especially for cities and states running ranked-choice elections for the first time. Issues such as voter education and potential litigation pose challenges in ensuring a smooth and fair electoral process.

The New York City Board of Elections' politically appointed commissioners have been a significant factor contributing to the election's mismanagement. Advocates stress the need for comprehensive election administration reform in New York to avoid similar problems in the future.

The delayed election outcome, a feature of RCV, requires voters to trust the system fully. Proponents highlight the success of RCV in other states and jurisdictions, where voters have expressed satisfaction and found it easy to use. Despite some opposition, RCV remains a favorable

alternative to plurality elections for many voters, as it better represents the voters' will in a splintered field of candidates.

In conclusion, while the New York City mayoral election fiasco has raised questions about RCV's suitability, proponents argue that the issues faced were not inherent to the system itself. The challenges posed by ranked-choice elections call for improved election administration and voter education. As more cities and states explore RCV, the experiences of other jurisdictions that have successfully implemented it can serve as encouraging examples for its adoption.

New York 2023 –

Low Turnout in New York City Primaries: Implications for Local Democracy

Introduction:

This research paper section highlights the issue of low turnout in New York City primaries during the 2023 election. The article discusses the abysmally low voter participation, with just 6.5% of eligible voters casting their ballots. The limited competition and lackluster primary turnout are identified as significant concerns that undermine local democracy in the city. The section explores the consequences of low turnout, including the skewed representation of the electorate and the potential negative impact on elected officials' behavior and responsiveness to constituents' needs.

Impact of Low Turnout on Electoral Process:

The article emphasizes that the low turnout in New York City primaries affects the democratic process negatively. With Republicans being noncompetitive in these races, the Democratic primary effectively replaces the general election. This lack of competition discourages voters from participating, allowing a small fraction of the population to decide the outcome. The dominance of special interest groups, political clubs, and the real estate industry further exacerbates the lack of political diversity and responsiveness in the candidates selected.

Consequences on Elected Officials and Governance:

The section also explores how low primary turnout may lead to politicians' lack of accountability. Incumbents can become entrenched in their positions, negotiating policies behind closed doors with little public input. Lack of public engagement and limited competition may embolden politicians, as seen in the case of Mayor Eric Adams berating a constituent who questioned his handling of rent regulations. With incumbency firmly established, the responsiveness of elected officials to the needs of the majority can diminish, affecting policy outcomes.

Proposed Solutions for Increasing Turnout:

The article suggests several potential solutions to address the issue of low primary turnout in New York City. One promising proposal is to shift local elections to even-

numbered years, aligning them with federal races that tend to have higher voter turnout. This change may help combat election fatigue and increase participation in local democracy. Additionally, adopting mail voting, which has shown promising results in other states, could simplify the voting process and encourage higher turnout.

Importance of Recruiting Compelling Candidates:

The section highlights the significance of recruiting compelling candidates who can inspire voter engagement and participation. The example of Yusef Salaam, who won a crowded Democratic City Council primary in Harlem, illustrates how candidates with strong narratives and community connections can attract voter support.

Conclusion:

Low turnout in New York City primaries is a pressing issue that hinders democratic representation and governance. The research section emphasizes the need for significant changes in the election system to increase participation and enhance the responsiveness of elected officials. Addressing this problem is vital for promoting a more inclusive and effective democratic process in one of the nation's most populous and economically important states.

New York Primary 2023

The 2023 primary election in New York City saw a remarkably low voter turnout, with less than 200,000

registered voters participating, representing a citywide turnout of about 6.5 percent. The primary took place amid state redistricting in 2022, leading to NYC Council elections being held two years earlier than usual and without any hotly contested citywide, state, or federal races to attract voters to the polls. The lackluster turnout was especially pronounced in the Bronx, where only about 5.3% of registered Democrats cast their ballots in the primary race for Bronx District attorney between incumbent Darcel Clark and challenger Tess Cohen. Despite having 535,955 active registered Democratic voters in Bronx County, only 28,472 voted in the primary. Similarly, the primary for Council District 14 in The Bronx saw just 2,985 out of 57,848 actively registered Democrats, or approximately 5%, cast their votes.

The borough of Queens, the only other borough with a countywide race for district attorney, also experienced an abysmal turnout, with only a few of the most competitive Council primary races surpassing a 10% turnout. However, District 9 in Harlem had relatively higher participation, with exonerated Central Park 5 member Yusef Salaam winning the Democratic City Council primary against two sitting Assembly members, Inez Dickens, and Al Taylor. In central Harlem, approximately 13.5% of the 81,511 active Democrats cast their ballots. In the hotly contested race for the new majority Asian District 43 Council District in

southern Brooklyn, around 12% of the 31,835 Democrats voted.

Comparatively, the 2021 Democratic primary for mayor saw a significantly higher turnout, with over 25% of the 3.1 million active registered Democrats in New York City casting their votes. This discrepancy in turnout rates has raised concerns about the effectiveness of holding primary elections in June and its potential to suppress voter participation, particularly in the absence of high-profile races.

The limited competition and low voter turnout in the 2023 primary have exacerbated existing issues in New York City politics. The lack of competitive primaries and low voter engagement have empowered incumbents and special interest groups, as Democrats often dominate local races and Republicans are noncompetitive in many areas. The impact of such limited competition is evident in the actions of elected officials, who may not fully represent the needs and concerns of the majority of their constituents.

To address the problem of low voter turnout and enhance local democracy in New York City, various measures have been proposed. One promising bill passed by both legislative chambers in June would shift many local elections to even-numbered years, coinciding with federal races for president and Congress, where turnout tends to be higher. This

change is expected to increase participation in local elections and make the electoral process more inclusive. However, some incumbents have resisted the shift to even years, underscoring the resistance to change among certain political circles.

In addition to shifting election years, adopting mail voting has been suggested as a means to improve voter participation. A bill awaiting the signature of Governor Kathy Hochul would introduce mail voting, making it more convenient for voters to participate and likely increasing voter turnout.

Furthermore, recruiting more compelling candidates to run for office could motivate more New Yorkers to participate in local elections. High-profile candidates who can capture the attention and support of voters can drive greater engagement and interest in the electoral process.

In conclusion, the 2023 New York City primary election highlighted the critical issue of low voter turnout and its implications for local democracy. The lack of competitive races and limited voter engagement have resulted in an unrepresentative political landscape and diminished public participation in decision-making processes. By implementing reforms such as shifting election years, introducing mail voting, and encouraging stronger candidate recruitment, New York City can work towards

enhancing its electoral system and ensuring a more robust and inclusive democratic process.

New Jersey 2023 –

A recent poll conducted by Fairleigh Dickinson University revealed that New Jersey residents are not inclined towards the adoption of ranked choice voting (RCV). This voting method, which requires voters to rank candidates by preference to ensure an election winner achieves a majority, has gained only 37% support among state residents, with 42% opposing it.

While Democrats show a relative favorability towards RCV at 43% support compared to 34% opposition, Republicans and independents in New Jersey largely disapprove, with respective percentages of 23%-58% and 39%-45%. The youth, specifically those aged 18 to 30, are more open to the system, showing a 43%-32% support rate. Conversely, the senior demographic, those aged 65 and over, strongly oppose it with 24% in favor and 64% against.

Dan Cassino, an FDU Government and Politics professor, commented on the state's sentiment, noting that while New Jersey voters are discontent with the state's political direction, they aren't keen on adopting a system that might challenge their party affiliations.

In contrast, regions such as New York City and states like Alaska and Maine have already implemented RCV. State

Senator Andrew Zwicker of New Jersey has championed the cause for a while, sponsoring legislation to introduce the system in both presidential and municipal elections. Additionally, Governor Phil Murphy in 2021 expressed a neutral stance on the matter, stating his openness to RCV but not prioritizing it.

The major political parties' resistance to RCV is evident in areas where it has been adopted. Cassino emphasized the lack of sufficient public support for the method, arguing that without it, legislators won't risk jeopardizing their parties.

The Fairleigh Dickinson poll, which ran from October 6-14, encompassed 813 adult participants from New Jersey, and has a margin of error of approximately 3.5%. (6)

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(6) Wildstein, D. (2023, October 24). Poll: New Jersey isn't ready for ranked choice voting. *New Jersey Globe*. https://newjerseyglobe.com/campaigns/poll-new-jersey-isnt-ready-for-ranked-choice-voting/

Chapter 20:

Missouri (2022)

Missouri's Ranked-Choice Voting Ballot Initiative Faces Signature Shortfall

A proposal to introduce ranked-choice voting in Missouri as a significant election reform may not make it to the November ballot due to potential signature shortages. The constitutional amendment, spearheaded by the campaign "Better Elections," required at least 171,592 valid signatures, distributed among six of the state's eight congressional districts. Despite submitting over 300,000 signatures, the initiative's qualification remains uncertain, prompting concerns among supporters.

The proposed amendment sought to change the electoral process by listing all candidates on a single primary ballot, with the top four proceeding to the general election. During the primary, voters would make only one choice, while the general election would implement ranked-choice voting, allowing voters to express preferences. The candidate with

a majority of top-choice votes would be elected; otherwise, the candidate with the fewest top-choice votes would be eliminated, and their votes redistributed based on preferences until a majority winner emerged.

The campaign behind the initiative, "Better Elections," received substantial funding of at least $6.8 million and invested $2.3 million in services from FieldWorks LLC for signature gathering. However, opposition groups raised concerns about the complexity and potential manipulation of ranked-choice voting. The outcome of Missouri's initiative could have implications for similar campaigns in other states.

The future of ranked-choice voting in Missouri remains uncertain.

While ranked-choice voting has been promoted as a way to increase voter representation and reduce polarization, its implementation in Missouri faces challenges.

(1) Keller, Rudi. (2022). Ranked-choice voting proposal may miss Missouri ballot, campaign says. Missouri Independent. Retrieved from https://missouriindependent.com/2022/06/16/ranked-choice-voting-proposal-may-miss-missouri-ballot-campaign-says/

Chapter 21:

San Francisco & Oakland (2010 - 2022)

Oakland 2010 –

The Winning Strategy in Oakland: Concentrate on Being 2nd or 3rd Choice

Introduction:

This research section discusses the 2010 Oakland mayoral race, which utilized a ranked-choice voting (RCV) system for the first time. The RCV system allowed voters to rank candidates in order of preference, leading to a different approach to campaigning and ultimately affecting the election outcome. The section explores the strategies employed by the winning candidate, Jean Quan, and analyzes the impact of RCV on the electoral process.

Background:

Ranked-choice voting (RCV) was introduced in Oakland, Berkeley, and San Leandro in 2010, allowing voters to rank their top three choices for a candidate. If no candidate received a majority of first-place votes, the candidate with the fewest votes was eliminated, and their second and third choices were redistributed until a candidate obtained a majority.

The Strategy of the Winning Candidate:

Jean Quan, a city councilwoman, emerged as the winner in the mayoral race by capitalizing on the RCV system. She positioned herself as the preferred second choice for many candidates, especially among those who were wary of the heavily favored candidate, Don Perata. By aligning with the other candidates, particularly major challenger Rebecca Kaplan, Quan became the leader of the "anybody but Don" coalition, appealing to voters who wanted an alternative to Perata.

Effect of RCV on Campaigning:

Quan's focused campaign to be the second-choice candidate for other contenders worked effectively. Unlike Perata's traditional front-runner strategy, Quan actively sought second and third-choice votes from other candidates. The strategy involved convincing supporters of other candidates to rank her as their second choice, leading to a significant surge in support during the redistribution of votes.

Impact of RCV on Election Outcome:

The RCV system in Oakland resulted in an upset victory for Quan, as she secured 51% of the vote compared to Perata's 49%. While Perata received more first-place votes, he fell short of the majority required for an outright win. Quan's ability to secure second and third-place votes from other candidates propelled her to victory.

Controversy and Concerns:

The use of RCV in the mayoral race raised concerns among some political experts. They argued that the possibility of a candidate leading in the first round but not being elected highlighted a potential flaw in the system. Critics also cited voter confusion as an issue, as a significant percentage of voters did not rank three candidates.

Conclusion:

The 2010 Oakland mayoral race demonstrated the impact of ranked-choice voting on campaign strategies and election outcomes. Jean Quan's successful approach of becoming the preferred second-choice candidate for other contenders led to her upset victory. However, concerns about potential flaws and voter confusion associated with RCV remain points of debate for future electoral reform discussions. Further research and analysis will be crucial to understanding the long-term implications of ranked-choice voting on the democratic process.

Oakland has 931,000 Registered Voters, 562,000 or 60% of the voters are Registered as Democrats, 222,000 Registered as No Party Preference, and 101,000 Registered Republicans.

Oakland 2022

Issues in Oakland, CA with Rank Choice Voting, this happened in the 2022 election.

"Following revelations that the Alameda County Registrar of Voters miscounted ballots for several ranked-choice races in the November election, the Board of Supervisors voted in January to have the registrar conduct recounts of four races—including the narrowly decided Oakland mayor's race. ...But over two months later, the recounts haven't been conducted, and the registrar of voters told the supervisors Tuesday that it's almost assured they never will. In December, the registrar of voters issued a press release admitting his team used the wrong settings on elections software to tabulate ranked-choice votes" "Still, the registrar's mistake fueled distrust in the results and boosted calls by some groups including the NAACP for a recount in the mayor's race."

Oaklandside.org Darwin Bond Graham March 15, 2023

This same year Alaska used RCV for the first time and it was the last State in the Country for regular election results and had the lowest voter turnout in the history of the State.

The presence of issues with ranked choice voting (RCV) tabulation in Oakland, as described, would indeed raise concerns about the effectiveness and reliability of RCV. The fact that there was a long court hearing before the real winner could be determined indicates significant challenges in the tabulation process. Such incidents can undermine public trust in the election outcomes and raise doubts about the accuracy and fairness of the results.

Additionally, if Alaska experienced notable delays in announcing its election results, being the last state in the country to do so, it further adds to the concerns about the efficiency and timeliness of implementing RCV. The reported errors in Oakland's RCV system, such as overvotes, duplicates, and skipped ranks, reveal misunderstandings about how the voting method works and how the ballots are tabulated. The varying error rates across precincts, with some as high as 23%, indicate the complexity of the system and the potential for confusion among voters. These errors can lead to invalidated ballots or inaccurate tabulations, affecting the integrity of the election process.

Considering these issues and errors, it is reasonable to express concern about the effectiveness of ranked choice voting. It highlights the importance of thorough education and outreach efforts to ensure voters understand the RCV process, and it emphasizes the need for accurate and

efficient tabulation systems to maintain the integrity of election results.

It is worth noting that these specific incidents and statistics pertain to the local context in Oakland, but they contribute to the broader discussions surrounding the implementation and potential challenges of ranked choice voting.

How Does RCV impact various Demographic Groups?

Demographically, Oakland is divided into two areas: "The Hills" (above 1-580) and "The Flats" (below 1-580), which represent higher and lower income areas respectively. This division is mirrored in the overvote rate, with lower error rates in the hills and significantly higher error rates in the flats, especially in East Oakland below 580. In the 2022 Oakland mayoral election, 3.5% of ballots (4,658) were overvoted, and the variation in overvoting by precinct was substantial. Some precincts had as few as 1 in 100 (1.0%) overvoted ballots, while others had as many as 1 in 8 (13.1%) overvoted ballots.

Oakland utilizes Ranked Choice Voting (RCV), where voters are asked to rank their preferred candidates. Overvoting, one of the detectable errors in RCV, occurs when a voter assigns the same rank to two candidates, which is not allowed. An examination of overvoted ballots reveals a pattern where many voters seem to be "rating" the

candidates like a survey, rather than ranking them. This similarity between a common "5-star" rating survey and a Ranked Choice Voting ballot leads to confusion among voters.

One significant issue in Oakland's election is the presence of incorrect instructions on the RCV ballots. Additionally, overvoting is just one of three major types of errors found on Ranked Choice Voting ballots, with the others being duplicate candidates and skipped ranks. Some precincts have error rates as high as 23% (1 in 4 voters) when considering all three error types. These precincts align closely with demographic factors, indicating that low-income, predominantly non-white precincts face greater challenges with Ranked Choice Voting and consequently experience higher rates of disenfranchisement compared to high-income, predominantly white precincts.

When we bring up these Demographic and Ballot complexity concerns to the very architechs of Rank Choice Voting nationally, we receive responses like “It will get better over time” and “These issues are temporary and once voters know how to use the systems, these error rates will decline.” Well in the next part of this chapter we will look at similar issues that took place 11 years ago in San Francisco.

Looking at San Francisco in 2011 and Oakland in 2022

The usage of ranked choice voting (RCV) has been a topic of interest and analysis in various elections across the United States. One notable study examines the 2011 San Francisco Municipal Election, specifically focusing on voters' tendencies to overvote, undervote, and rank candidates. Conducted by Corey Cook, Ph.D., and David Latterman, M.S., M.P.P. from the University of San Francisco, this report sheds light on the impact of RCV on voter behavior and identifies patterns related to demographics and political preferences.

Challenges and Issues with Ranked Choice Voting Implementation:

Ranked choice voting has faced criticism and scrutiny due to various challenges and issues that have arisen during its implementation. One significant concern is the correlation between RCV and demographic factors, particularly in low-income and predominantly non-white precincts. These communities have experienced higher rates of disenfranchisement compared to high-income, predominantly white precincts. Additionally, errors on RCV ballots, including overvoting, duplicate candidates, and skipped ranks, have raised questions about the accuracy and reliability of the system. The case of the 2022 Oakland, CA Mayoral election highlights the presence of incorrect instructions on RCV ballots, causing confusion among voters. As these challenges persist, discussions surrounding

the effectiveness and fairness of ranked choice voting continue to shape the conversation on electoral systems and democratic processes.

1. San Francisco 2011:

A report on the 2011 San Francisco Municipal Election examined the usage of ranked choice voting (RCV). The study found that precincts with higher proportions of Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, and older voters, as well as more progressive precincts, were more likely to have ballots containing overvotes. Additionally, precincts with higher concentrations of older, moderate, Latino, and Asian and Pacific Islander voters tended to vote for only one candidate instead of ranking multiple preferences.

2. Implementation Challenges:

The implementation of RCV in precincts is closely correlated with demographic factors. Low-income and predominantly non-white precincts face challenges with RCV, resulting in higher rates of disenfranchisement compared to high-income, predominantly white precincts. Overvoting, along with other error types such as duplicate candidates and skipped ranks, poses significant issues in RCV ballots. Some precincts experience error rates as high as 23%, affecting one in four voters.

Specific Case: Oakland 2022:

In the 2022 Oakland, CA Mayoral election, incorrect instructions on RCV ballots caused confusion. The discrepancy between the instructions for a "5 star" rating survey and RCV ballots led to added challenges in the election process. A significant number of ballots (3.5%) were overvoted, with varying rates across different precincts. The division in overvote rates aligns closely with the demographic division of Oakland, particularly between higher-income areas and lower-income areas.

These findings highlight the challenges and discrepancies associated with ranked choice voting. Concerns about overvoting, undervoting, and demographic disparities in ballot errors call for a closer examination of the system's effectiveness and fairness. Critics, including Governor Gavin Newsom of California and former Governor Jerry Brown, have expressed concerns about voter confusion and the complexity of ranked-choice voting. Similarly, Governor Charlie Baker of Massachusetts emphasized the need for thorough evaluation before implementing RCV. Governor Steve Sisolak of Nevada raised concerns about rushed changes to the constitutional process, which could potentially exacerbate confusion and exclusion within the system. These viewpoints highlight the importance of further exploration, analysis, and education to ensure a fair and reliable voting system.

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Chapter 22:

Alaska 2022

Challenges and Controversies in Alaska's Ranked-Choice Voting Experience

The implementation of ranked-choice voting (RCV) in Alaska during the 2022 elections resulted in notable delays, making it the last state in the country to announce its election results. This raises doubts about the claim that RCV is inherently faster than traditional elections. The specific instance in Alaska indicates that the introduction of RCV does not guarantee prompt results.

The experience in Alaska highlighted several challenges and complexities associated with the implementation of RCV.

One notable issue was the removal of Al Gross's name from the special general election ballot. This situation underscored potential difficulties in handling candidate withdrawals and adhering to election laws and regulations. The Alaska Supreme Court noted that the Division of

Elections failed to strictly comply with the deadlines set by election law. According to the court, if the Division had followed the law, Gross's name should have remained on the special general election ballot. The failure to uphold these regulations raises concerns about the proper handling of candidate withdrawals and its impact on the overall election process.

Considering the delays in announcing results and the mishandling of candidate withdrawals, it calls into question the accuracy of the claim that ranked-choice voting is better than traditional elections. The experience in Alaska suggests that the timeliness of election results can be influenced by various factors, regardless of the voting method employed. It emphasizes the significance of meticulous planning, effective implementation, and adherence to election laws to ensure the smooth functioning of any voting system, including RCV.

The controversies and challenges faced by Alaska in implementing ranked-choice voting shed light on the complexities involved in transitioning to a new electoral system. Alaska's experience serves as a valuable lesson in understanding the intricacies of introducing and successfully conducting ranked-choice voting.

The Impact of Al Gross's Absence from the Ballot in the Alaska U.S. House Race

The absence of Al Gross's name from the ballot in the U.S. House race in Alaska during the 2022 elections had a significant impact on the dynamics of the race, potentially leading to a split in the Republican vote.

Initially, the race featured two Republicans and two Democrats vying for the seat. However, on June 21, 2022, 56 days before the special general election and the regular primary election, Al Gross filed his withdrawal from both contests. At that time, preliminary results showed Gross with the third most votes in the special primary election, while Mary Peltola and Tara Sweeney followed in fourth and fifth place, respectively.

The Alaska Supreme Court acknowledged that the Division of Elections failed to strictly comply with election law deadlines in handling Gross's withdrawal. Under the law, unless a candidate withdraws "after the primary election and 64 or more days before the general election," their name should remain on the general election ballot. However, the Division of Elections did not adhere to this requirement, resulting in Gross's name being removed from the ballot.

The absence of Gross's name on the ballot potentially impacted the race by narrowing the field and enhancing the possibility of splitting the Republican vote. With only two

Republicans and one Democrat remaining in the race, the chances of Republican voters being divided between multiple candidates increased. This scenario could have favored the remaining Democrat candidate, potentially altering the final outcome.

Speculating on the exact outcome of the race is challenging, as it depends on various factors, including voter behavior and candidate strategies. However, Gross's absence from the ballot likely influenced the dynamics of the election, removing a significant contender and increasing the chances of a divided Republican vote.

The controversy surrounding Gross's withdrawal and the Division of Elections' failure to comply with deadlines underscores the importance of meticulous adherence to election laws and regulations. Strict compliance ensures the integrity of the election process and provides voters with a fair and accurate representation of the choices available to them.

While it is impossible to determine the exact impact of Gross's presence on the ballot, the situation highlights the significance of candidate participation in shaping the electoral landscape. It serves as a reminder that the inclusion or exclusion of candidates can have profound effects on voter decision-making and the overall outcome of the election

"The Division (of Elections) Failed To Strictly Comply With Election Law Deadlines." Alaska Supreme Court

"On June 21, 2022 — 56 days before the special general election and the regular primary election — Dr. Al Gross filed his withdrawal from both elections. At that time, preliminary special election results indicated that Dr. Gross had the third most votes in the special primary election, followed by Mary Peltola with the fourth most votes and Tara Sweeney with the fifth most votes.

Though the parties did not raise the issue of Dr. Gross's name being removed from the special general election ballot, we are troubled by the Division's apparent failure to abide by the statute and its own regulations in this regard. Under our interpretation of AS 15.25.100, unless a candidate withdraws "after the primary election and 64 or more days before the general election," the Division "shall place on the general election ballot only the names of the four candidates receiving the greatest number of votes for an office." This language makes clear that, had the Division strictly followed the law, Dr. Gross's name should have remained on the special general election ballot. Similarly, under 6 AAC 25.210(b), the 64-day replacement deadline applies to removing a withdrawn candidate's name from the general election ballot. Abiding by this regulation would have required the Division to leave Dr. Gross's name on the ballot" – Alaska Supreme Court April 28th, 2023

President Trump Visits Alaska 2022-

Former President Donald Trump expressed strong criticism of ranked-choice voting systems during a rally in Anchorage, Alaska. He specifically targeted Alaskan Senator Lisa Murkowski, who voted to convict him during his second impeachment trial. Trump accused her of being responsible for the state adopting ranked-choice voting, which he referred to as "ranked choice crap voting."

Trump claimed that ranked-choice voting makes it difficult to determine the winner and can result in candidates with lower rankings winning the election. He referred to the system as "a total rigged deal" and compared it to other things he perceives as unfair in the country.

The crowd at the rally appeared to share Trump's sentiment, booing the idea of ranked-choice voting and expressing mistrust in the ranking process. Many rally attendees indicated that they prefer to vote for only one candidate with a No. 1 ranking, rejecting the concept of ranking multiple candidates.

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(2) Brooks, J. (2023). Al Gross should have stayed on U.S. House ballot, Alaska Supreme Court says. Anchorage Daily News. Retrieved from https://www.adn.com/politics/2023/04/29/al-gross-should-have-stayed-on-us-house-ballot-alaska-supreme-court-says/

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Chapter 23:

DC Democrats Against Ranked Choice Voting (2023)

Washington, D.C. (May 31, 2023) - The DC Democratic Party has concluded that Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) is not in the best interest of voters and candidates in the District of Columbia. After an extensive eight-month discussion and careful deliberation, the party reached this decision, taking into account the unique characteristics of the District and the potential impact of RCV on the electoral system.

"We have identified significant concerns that prevent us from endorsing this approach," stated the party. One of the fundamental issues highlighted is the unequal voter turnout across District wards, which RCV would not adequately address and could potentially undermine democratic principles.

Undervoting, a significant challenge faced by the District, would also be worsened by the adoption of ranked choice voting. The party's priority is to ensure that every vote is counted accurately and that the voice of each voter is properly represented, without introducing complexities that hinder voter engagement and participation.

The DC Democratic Party expressed wariness about the broader agenda associated with RCV, stating, "It was clear to us then that RCV is part of a broader agenda to erode the influence of the strong Democratic base in the District." They highlighted concerns about potential consequences such as jungle primaries that could undermine the rights of registered Democrats to choose their nominee for public office.

The party firmly believes in ensuring that every voter, regardless of party affiliation or independent status, has the right to freely choose their preferred candidate. They emphasize that the current electoral system in the District provides ample choices for voters to engage with the political process and participate in the general election, without disenfranchising anyone.

Through this comprehensive process, the DC Democratic Party has determined that RCV is not suitable for the District of Columbia, taking into consideration its unique circumstances and the potential consequences it may bring.

THE DC DEMOCRATIC PARTY STANDS FIRM AGAINST THE MAKE ALL VOTES COUNT D.C. BALLOT INITIATIVE

Washington, D.C. (May 31, 2023) - The DC Democratic Party, after an extensive eight-month discussion and careful deliberation, has concluded that Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in the District of Columbia is not in the best interest of the voters and candidates.

Throughout this comprehensive process, the DC Democratic Party encouraged robust debate and engaged ward and affiliate organizations to thoroughly examine the potential benefits and drawbacks of RCV. After evaluating the unique characteristics of the District and the impact RCV would have on the electoral system, a decision has been reached.

It has been acknowledged that RCV may be a suitable option for certain jurisdictions; however, when considering the District's specific circumstances, significant concerns have been identified that prevent endorsement of this approach.

One fundamental issue that has been identified is that District wards are not equal in terms of voter turnout. Implementing RCV would not adequately address this

disparity and could potentially undermine the democratic principles that the party strives to uphold.

The District faces a considerable challenge with undervoting, which would be further exacerbated by the adoption of Ranked Choice Voting. The priority is to ensure that every vote is counted and that the voice of each voter is accurately represented, without introducing additional complexities that could hinder voter engagement and participation.

Importantly, it has been recognized that RCV is not merely an innocent attempt to improve the electoral system. It has become clear that Ranked Choice Voting is part of a broader agenda to erode the influence of the strong Democratic base in the District. The party is wary of the potential consequences of this initiative, including the opening of doors to jungle primaries that could undermine the rights of registered Democrats to choose their nominee for public office.

The party firmly believes that every voter, regardless of party affiliation or independent status, should have the right to freely choose their preferred candidate. The current electoral system in the District ensures that no one is disenfranchised, providing ample choices for voters to engage with the political process and participate in the general election.

The D.C. Democratic Party has voiced strong opposition to a proposed ballot initiative that seeks to introduce ranked choice voting (RCV) and jungle primaries in Washington, D.C. elections. Here are the main points from the articles referenced:

1. Background: The Make All Votes Count D.C. campaign unveiled the proposal in May. It aims to:

Allow about 85,000 independent voters (16% of the city's electorate) to vote in semi jungle primaries. These voters would be permitted to vote in the partisan primary of their choice, an approach similar to those in states like Arizona, Colorado, Massachusetts, and West Virginia.

Introduce ranked choice voting by 2026. In RCV, voters rank candidates by preference. If no candidate receives an outright majority, the lowest performing candidate is eliminated, and votes are reallocated based on next preferences until one candidate wins a majority.

2. D.C. Democratic Party's Opposition: During a D.C. Board of Elections meeting:

Party officials and activists claimed the initiative would violate the law by:

Forcing D.C. to incur costs in adapting its election system and educating its voters.

Potentially disenfranchising senior voters, those with disabilities, and non English speakers.

They also contended that RCV would overcomplicate the voting process.

They criticized jungle primaries, asserting they would weaken the city's established system of partisan primaries and potentially infringe upon the U.S. Constitution.

3. Supporters' Counterarguments:

They adjusted the initiative's language to ensure any funding needs are contingent on council approval.

Supporters view jungle primaries as an extension, not a removal, of the city's closed partisan primaries.

Claims that RCV would be too complex were rebuked, with supporters noting that such criticism is outdated and offensive.

4. Pending Decision and Broader Context:

The D.C. Board of Elections has yet to decide if the initiative can be placed on the ballot. If approved, it will move to the signature collection phase.

The discussions around RCV and jungle primaries in D.C. mirror wider debates in the Washington region and other

parts of the country. While some see RCV as a democratic tool, others find it confusing or even misleading.

5. Criticism and Support for RCV in Other Regions:

Various U.S. municipalities have had mixed experiences with RCV, leading to both support and criticism. Some instances, such as inaccurate counts or high rates of discarded ballots, have led to skepticism.

States like Maine and Alaska have also seen contentious outcomes due to RCV.

The D.C. decision on this proposal will influence whether the city embraces these voting reforms, joining the ranks of other jurisdictions that have adopted similar measures.

Reference the lawsuit to block Ranked Choice Voting

This provides an interesting perspective on how the potential implementation of jungle primaries and ranked choice voting might have altered the political trajectory of the District of Columbia.

1. Historical Context: On 12 September 1978, in the Democratic Primary, Marion Barry defeated Sterling Tucker by a slim margin of 1,400 votes. Walter Washington finished third, not far behind Barry.

2. The Significance of the Historical Election: Given the small margin, the introduction of ranked choice voting

(RCV) might have produced a different result. In RCV, if no candidate gets over 50% of the vote, the candidate with the least votes is eliminated, and their votes are redistributed based on the voters' second choices. The process is repeated until a candidate achieves a majority.

3. D.C. Home Rule Act: This provides context about the importance of local governance in D.C. The signing of the D.C. Home Rule Act by President Richard Nixon allowed greater autonomy for the district, allowing it to hold its elections and shape its local policies.

4. Marion Barry's Victory: Barry's win marked the beginning of a system where local elections in D.C. have always been decided by a plurality of the vote.

5. The "Make All Votes Count Act of 2024": This initiative, if approved, would overhaul the voting system in D.C. The main points are:

- The implementation of jungle primaries, allowing non-affiliated voters to participate in party primaries.

- The introduction of ranked choice voting.

- Over 80,000 people, currently registered without party affiliation, would be able to participate in party primaries, potentially changing the political dynamics.

6. Legal Protest: The excerpt concludes with a legal argument that the D.C. Board of Elections isn't authorized to approve the initiative, suggesting that local voting processes in D.C. cannot be altered via such an initiative

Analysis:

The core argument appears to revolve around the potential implications of the "Make All Votes Count Act of 2024." Ranked choice voting and jungle primaries can significantly change electoral dynamics, often by reducing the impact of extreme factions within parties and ensuring that the elected representative has broader support. The historical anecdote about Marion Barry's election is used to underscore how significant the implications of such changes can be.

However, the protest action stresses that changing such a system might not be legally feasible, emphasizing that the D.C. Board of Elections may not have the authority to make such sweeping changes.

Would you like to dive deeper into any specific area, or is there another way you'd like me to assist further?

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(3) DC Democratic Party. (2021). Ranked Choice Voting. Retrieved from https://www.dcdemocraticparty.org/rcv

(4) Fleetwood, Shawn. (2023). Ranked-Choice Voting Is So Bad For Elections, Even D.C. Democrats Are Rejecting It. The Federalist. Retrieved from https://thefederalist.com/2023/06/05/ranked-choice-voting-is-so-bad-for-elections-even-d-c-democrats-are-rejecting-it/

Chapter 24:

Virgina 2021 & 2023

Republican Primary 2021 – Glenn Youngkin

From an anti-RCV perspective, the case of Virginia Glenn Youngkin's election in a closed party primary is often used as an example to argue against the merits of Ranked Choice Voting. Proponents of RCV often claim that Youngkin's victory is evidence of how RCV can be beneficial for Republicans and helped him secure the nomination. However, anti-RCV advocates argue that this interpretation is misleading and inaccurate.(1)

The first point of contention is that Youngkin would have won the closed Republican primary in the first round regardless of whether RCV was used or not. His victory in the subsequent rounds, if applicable, did not change the outcome of the election. Thus, proponents of RCV using Youngkin's election as a success story for their cause is seen as misleading, as RCV did not have any significant impact on the ultimate result.

Moreover, it is essential to distinguish between a closed party primary, like the one Youngkin participated in, and a Jungle Primary combined with a Ranked Choice Voting system used in places like San Francisco or Alaska. In a closed party primary, only registered party members can vote, making it fundamentally different from a Jungle Primary where all candidates, regardless of party affiliation, run on the same ballot. The dynamics of a closed party primary are distinct, and applying the results to a Jungle Primary scenario with RCV is not an accurate representation.

The crux of the anti-RCV argument is that Youngkin's victory in a closed party primary is not a genuine example of RCV's effects on elections. The traditional primary process and the closed nature of the contest played a more significant role in determining the outcome. Therefore, using Youngkin's election to persuade Republicans that RCV is favorable for their party is considered misleading and not reflective of how RCV might function in a different electoral context.

In conclusion, from an anti-RCV perspective, the example of Glenn Youngkin's election in a closed party primary does not demonstrate the benefits of Ranked Choice Voting for Republicans. The election outcome would have remained the same, regardless of whether RCV was implemented or not. Drawing a direct correlation between Youngkin's

victory and the merits of RCV is seen as flawed reasoning, as it ignores the specific circumstances of the closed party primary and its differences from other election systems that utilize RCV.

Arlington 2023 –

Arlington County in Virginia recently experimented with ranked-choice voting (RCV) during a Democratic primary for two open seats on the County Board. The County Board has decided not to implement RCV in the upcoming general election. Concerns were raised about confusion regarding the voting process and whether outreach efforts effectively reached minority groups.

One notable concern that emerged was related to the use of uncertified election software to tally the RCV votes. The software, provided by a Pro-RCV group called 'RCV Resource Center in North Carolina", lacked third-party certification for accuracy. This raises questions about the reliability of the vote tabulation process and added to the skepticism surrounding RCV implementation.

Proponents of ranked-choice voting argue that it can reduce political polarization and empower voters, while skeptics worry about its complexity and potential erosion of trust.

It is essential to address the concerns raised, including the need for third-party certification of election software for accuracy and transparency. As Arlington considers the

possibility of revisiting ranked-choice voting in future elections, ensuring the reliability and integrity of the vote tabulation process will be a crucial aspect to be taken into account.(2)

(1) Ballotpedia. Glenn Youngkin. Retrieved from https://ballotpedia.org/Glenn_Youngkin

(2) Armus, T., & Swenson, K. (2023, July 28). [Title of the article]. *The Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2023/07/15/ranked-choice-voting-cancelled-arlington/

Chapter 25:

Minnetonka, Minnesota 2023

"Voting in America should be plain and simple. Ranked choice voting is neither. It is confusing and complex ... it favors elites who know how to work the new and complex system. ~ Walter F. Mondale"

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has. ~ Margaret Mead"

MINNETONKA CHARTER COMMISSION REJECTED RANKED CHOICE VOTING IN 2020

Our Charter Commission said "NO" but OUTSIDE $$ pushed it through anyway!

MTKA Citizens 4 Common Sense

In Minnetonka, the contentious issue of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) has stirred significant local debate. The

Minnetonka Charter Commission, back in 2020, took a firm stand against the adoption of RCV. However, despite this clear mandate, external monetary influences successfully instigated the system's imposition on the unsuspecting city. "MTKA Citizens 4 Common Sense," a grassroots initiative born out of concern, presents itself as a nonpartisan congregation of local residents. This includes a diverse group of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans, all coming together to combat the RCV Ballot question. But they faced an uphill battle. As they recall, "We were outspent by a well-funded outside group of people who tricked our residents into changing the way we vote."

Before the introduction of RCV, Minnetonka had a voting system that was both equitable and uncomplicated. Contrary to the promises that RCV would foster a more courteous electoral atmosphere, the year 2021 saw a surge in hostility and resentment. The stark difference between promises and reality has cast a shadow over RCV's supposed advantages. One impassioned statement from the Minnetonka Repeal Effort puts it plainly: "RCV is an expensive scam that's simply not welcome in Minnetonka - let's send it packing!"(1)

Across the nation, the narrative surrounding RCV often revolves around external interference, befuddled voters, escalating costs, and disgruntled local communities. There's a pattern, as described in a comprehensive study, where

communities embrace RCV and then subsequently disavow it after a single election cycle. An interesting angle emerges from this narrative; the historical attempts to eradicate the political party structure through various election systems. Despite the numerous endeavors, it remains improbable for an electoral system in the U.S. to thrive if its primary aim is the obliteration of party politics.

National entities advocating for RCV often couple it with other radical electoral reforms, such as jungle primaries, campaign finance modifications, the call to legalize cannabis, an appeal to dismantle the electoral college, and a push towards a national popular vote. This repertoire, while extensive, seems to be consistently rebuffed by communities informed of past RCV misadventures. As the story goes, Aspen back in 2009, following a brief dalliance with RCV, swiftly reverted after just a single election cycle. Current movements in Alaska mirror this sentiment. Minnetonka, in this broader context, becomes yet another cautionary tale, underscoring the cyclical nature of RCV's history.Winston Churchill said, “Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.”

It seems we are doomed to repeat RCV history until voters make the decision to educate themselves. Make sure to push back against the so-called reformers. Take a stand in your state and tell out of state money to take a hike. Our republic is a voters responsibility.

“Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free.” — President Ronald Reagan

Where is the evidence – University of Minnesota

Book Section: Where's the Evidence Supporting Ranked Choice Voting Claims?

Penny Thomas and Lawrence Jacobs dive deep into the world of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in their comprehensive analysis, challenging the assertions put forward by its proponents. They systematically dissect each claim to discern whether RCV genuinely improves the electoral landscape as promised.

Claim #1: Reduce Political Polarization

Contrary to the widespread notion that RCV curtails political polarization, Thomas and Jacobs' examination reveals a lack of substantial research backing this claim. An in-depth analysis even indicates the potential of RCV to intensify the hostility between major political factions like Democrats and Republicans. Furthermore, they noted that while RCV might provide an avenue for newer parties to

emerge, the electoral success of independent and third-party contenders remains marginal.

Claim #2: Increase Diversity of Elected Officials

The duo found that while there might be a slight uptick in racial and ethnic minority candidates due to RCV, evidence supporting their increased electoral success is scarce. The minor surge of female victors in regions like the Bay Area post-RCV introduction seems to correlate more with amplified recruitment drives and broader national shifts than with the voting mechanism itself.

Claim #3: Increase Voter Turnout and Engagement of Voters of Color

The touted benefits of RCV in amplifying voter participation and engagement, particularly among voters of color, find minimal backing in existing research. Some studies even point towards a decline in voter turnout and reduced candidate ranking among African American communities. Conversely, white voters appear more inclined to rank multiple candidates. Thomas and Jacobs found negligible discrepancies in turnout rates between cities employing RCV and those adhering to the traditional system.

Claim #4: Decrease Negative Campaigning

The realm of campaigning under RCV offers mixed findings. While certain studies applaud RCV for toning down

negative campaigning, a larger body of research suggests either negligible changes or a surge in negative tactics. An interesting observation emerged when assessing media platforms: newspapers in RCV cities portrayed campaigns in a marginally brighter light, yet social media platforms, especially Twitter, evidenced heightened negativity during RCV elections.

Conclusively, Thomas and Jacobs underscore the imperative of meticulously scrutinizing the purported advantages of RCV. Their findings propose that while RCV may present certain benefits, it doesn't invariably fulfill its lofty promises. Whether it's in bridging political divides, enhancing diversity, elevating voter participation, or curtailing negativity, the empirical evidence surrounding RCV's efficacy remains contested.

Reject Effort to Change Duluth's City Charter: A Plea Against Ranked-Choice Voting," Duluth News Tribune, October 31, 2015.

“I urge Duluth residents to reject the proposed alteration to their city’s charter by voting “no” on the ranked-choice voting amendment. The essence of voting in America should be straightforward and simple, yet ranked-choice voting fails to meet these standards due to its complexity and confusing nature.

Evidence from various academic studies suggests that affluent and well-educated voters fare well with ranked-choice voting. However, this method often disadvantages other groups, particularly older voters. Thus, for those who believe in a transparent American voting system accessible to all, I urge a "no" vote on ranked-choice voting.

Former Duluth Mayor Don Ness pointed out that during his initial campaign, which included 11 opponents, the introduction of a ranked-choice voting format would have obstructed a genuine debate regarding Duluth's future. I stand firmly behind this observation.

Consider the 2013 Minneapolis city election where 20% of participating voters were not accounted for in the final round of vote counting for the mayor's race, embodying the essence of disenfranchisement. Proponents of ranked-choice voting argue that their system ensures a majority winner. However, this was not the case in the Minneapolis mayor's race nor in two City Council races.

Ranked-choice voting does not promise more democracy but rather favors elites who have learned to navigate this new and complex system. Furthermore, it should be noted that almost a third of the cities that have implemented ranked-choice voting have since repealed it.

Duluth residents have always valued common sense. I trust that this value will be demonstrated on Tuesday when you vote "no" on ranked-choice voting."

Sincerely,

Walter F. Mondale,

Former Vice President of the United States,

Minneapolis

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(2) Thomas, Penny & Jacobs, Lawrence. (2023). Where's the evidence supporting Ranked Choice Voting Claims?. Retrieved from https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iAsKwuorivY1zNtnyxaiHKhGlVcOjSPA/view?pli=1

(3) Fisher, S., Lee, A., & Lelkes, Y. (2021). Electoral Systems and Political Attitudes: Experimental Evidence. Retrieved from https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3803603

(4) Cerrone, J., & McClintock, C. (2021). Ranked-Choice Voting, Runoff, and Democracy: Insights

from Maine and Other U.S. States. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3769409

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(6) John, S., Smith, H., & Zack, E. (2018). The alternative vote: Do changes in single-member voting systems affect descriptive representation of women and minorities? Electoral Studies, 54, 90-102.

(7) Terrell, C. R., Lamendola, C., & Reilly, M. (2021). Election Reform and Women's Representation: Ranked Choice Voting in the U.S. Politics and Governance, 9(2), 332–343.

(8) McDaniel, J. A. (2016). Writing the Rules to Rank the Candidates: Examining the Impact of Instant-Runoff Voting on Racial Group Turnout in San Francisco Mayoral Elections. Journal of Urban Affairs, 38, 387-408.

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(11) Donovan, T., Tolbert, C., & Gracey, K. (2016). Campaign Civility under Preferential and Plurality Voting. Electoral Studies, 42, 157-163.

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Chapter 26:

Arizona 2023

Title: HCR 2033: Protecting Arizona's Electoral Integrity through a Ban on Ranked Choice Voting

Introduction:

The introduction of House Concurrent Resolution 2033 (HCR 2033) in Arizona has sparked a fierce debate over the implementation of ranked choice voting (RCV). Proponents argue that RCV can foster more moderate candidates, but opponents, including freshman Scottsdale legislator Alexander Kolodin, believe that the system undermines voter choices and consolidates power among centrist candidates. As Arizona lawmakers take preemptive action to protect the state's electoral integrity, the discussion surrounding HCR 2033 highlights the importance of carefully considering the implications of ranked choice voting on democracy.

HCR2033: A Ban on Ranked Choice Voting

Introduction:

The landscape of American electoral systems has been shifting, with ranked choice voting (RCV) becoming a focal point in many state discussions. In Arizona, 2023 saw a heightened debate on this matter, as the state mulled over the possibility of prohibiting RCV. This piece will offer insights into House Concurrent Resolution 2033 (HCR 2033) and its broader impact on Arizona's electoral system.

Understanding Ranked Choice Voting:

Ranked choice voting, also termed as instant runoff voting, operates by capturing the ranked preferences of voters. If no contender secures a majority initially, the least-voted candidate is eliminated, and their votes are reallocated based on the next preferences. This process continues until a candidate achieves a majority. With its implementation in states like Maine and Alaska and numerous U.S. cities, RCV's appeal is evident. While supporters laud its potential to produce centrist contenders and reduce electoral negativity, critics argue it could alienate voters by prematurely sidelining their top choices.

A Closer Look at House Concurrent Resolution 2033:

The political fabric of Arizona was notably agitated with the introduction of HCR 2033 in 2023. Advocated by Representative Austin Smith, this potential constitutional amendment aspires to distance Arizona from RCV and

associated systems. Gaining traction and critique largely divided by party affiliations, its destiny lies in the 2024 electorate's hands. The core motive behind this initiative seems rooted in preserving Arizona's electoral traditions.

Diverging Views on the Proposed Ban:

HCR 2033's discourse is rife with passion. Representatives Smith and Alexander Kolodin, among others, raise apprehensions about RCV possibly diminishing the purity of electoral choices, accentuating moderate views, and potentially overshadowing party loyalists. Conversely, entities like Save Democracy Arizona see RCV as a pathway to enhanced representation, motivating politicians to resonate with a wider voter base, and averting legislative impasses. For these advocates, the proposed prohibition appears regressive.

Future Implications:

Arizona's stance on RCV will undoubtedly leave an imprint on its future political scenario. While a ban could reaffirm the status quo, embracing RCV might introduce more moderate political factions. The enthusiasm surrounding HCR 2033 reflects a broader national introspection of voting systems and their adaptability to a changing demographic.

Conclusion:

Arizona's unfolding RCV narrative, symbolized by HCR 2033, is reflective of the larger, ongoing electoral debates

across the U.S. Some champion it as a modern, inclusive system, while others are wary of its implications. As Arizona decides its course in 2024, the outcome will either inaugurate an innovative electoral era or reiterate its allegiance to existing norms.

(1) Ballotpedia. Arizona Require Partisan Primary Elections Amendment (2023). Retrieved from https://ballotpedia.org/Arizona_Require_Partisan_Primary_Elections_Amendment_(2024)

(2) Austin for Arizona. Retrieved from https://www.austinforarizona.com/

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(4) AZ Free News. (2023). Group hopes to outlaw partisan primaries. Retrieved from https://azfreenews.com/2023/07/group-hopes-to-outlaw-partisan-primaries/

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https://kjzz.org/content/1843162/republicans-make-moves-ban-ranked-choice-voting-it-reaches-arizona-ballot

Chapter 27:

Ohio

Issues with Implementing Ranked-Choice Voting in University Heights, Ohio

Ranked-choice voting (RCV) has gained attention as an alternative to traditional election systems in various states and cities, including New York, Minneapolis, San Francisco, Alaska, and Maine. RCV requires voters to rank multiple candidates in order of preference, aiming to ensure that the eventual winner obtains a majority of the votes. Proponents of RCV argue that it fosters less polarized politics, promotes centrist candidates with broad support, and enhances voter choice and representation. However, the system is not without its challenges and criticisms.

In University Heights, Ohio, a review of the city charter was undertaken to increase voter participation, but the proposal to adopt RCV was not included on the ballot. The city council members expressed concern about the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections' capacity to conduct such elections, given that the

current voting equipment and software are not designed for RCV. This issue highlights one of the administrative hurdles faced when attempting to implement RCV in new jurisdictions.

Advocates, including Katherine M. Gehl and Michael E. Porter, authors of "The Politics Industry: How Political Innovation Can Break Partisan Gridlock and Save Our Democracy," emphasize the need to replace the current plurality voting system, which they view as a barrier to new competition in politics. RCV proponents believe that it encourages lawmakers to support bills based on conscience rather than fearing backlash from special interests or partisan primary voters.

Despite its growing popularity, RCV faces opposition and skepticism. Critics argue that the system is too complex and may not guarantee the election of moderate candidates (e.g. Nearly 60% of Alaskans voting for a Republican in the 2022 US House Election and a Democrat Mary Peltola was victorious). Conservative organizations, such as the Foundation for Government Accountability, contend that RCV undermines voter confidence, leads to slower election results, and increases irregularities. Republican-led states, including Florida, Tennessee, Idaho, Montana, and South Dakota, have passed measures banning RCV for various elections.

In Ohio, a state with increasing interest in RCV, the process is still relatively uncharted territory. Ohio's current voting systems lack the capacity to conduct RCV elections, and implementing

the necessary software updates and certifications would take time and resources. Moreover, opponents claim that RCV results in delayed election outcomes and confusion among voters.

The situation in University Heights exemplifies the challenges of introducing RCV in a new jurisdiction. While proponents of RCV argue that it can foster more positive campaigns, improve representation, and enhance voter satisfaction, the administrative hurdles and opposition from some political quarters pose significant obstacles. Advocates of RCV continue to push for its adoption, aiming to increase voter choice, representation, and civility in politics. They push these ideals even if the local communities are not prepared for the election system, are not prepared to pay for the election system, or the awareness of expensive voter education necessary to make sure voters are aware of how to vote in a ranked choice voting election.

(1) Cleveland.com. (2023). Could ranked-choice voting promote civil discourse? Of course, there's disagreement over it. Retrieved from https://www.cleveland.com/news/2023/07/could-ranked-choice-voting-promote-civil-discourse-of-course-theres-disagreement-over-it.html

Chapter 28:

How to Stop Rank Choice Voting from Infecting Your State

Citizen Initiative –

The citizen ballot initiative process allows citizens to propose and directly enact laws or constitutional amendments through a statewide voting process. It is a form of direct democracy that empowers citizens to bypass the legislative branch and place important issues directly on the ballot for the public to decide.

The process typically begins with citizens or advocacy groups drafting a proposed law or amendment. They must adhere to specific guidelines, such as gathering a required number of signatures from registered voters within a designated timeframe. The signature requirement often varies depending on the jurisdiction and the type of initiative.

Once the required number of signatures is collected, the proposal is submitted to the relevant election authorities, who verify the signatures' authenticity. If the initiative meets the necessary requirements, it is placed on the ballot for the next election.

During the election, voters have the opportunity to directly vote on the proposed initiative. If a majority of voters support the initiative, it becomes law or an amendment to the constitution, depending on the nature of the proposal. In some cases, a supermajority vote may be required for certain types of initiatives or constitutional amendments.

The citizen ballot initiative process is intended to provide a mechanism for citizens to have a direct impact on policymaking and to address issues that may not receive attention or action from the legislative branch. It allows for greater citizen participation and engagement in the democratic process, enabling them to shape the laws and policies that govern their communities and states.

Legislative Ban –

Bans on Ranked-Choice Voting: Protecting Election Integrity and Voter Clarity

In this chapter, we explore the recent bans on ranked-choice voting in five states: Florida, Tennessee, Idaho, Montana, and South Dakota. These states took decisive action to safeguard the integrity and simplicity of their future

elections by prohibiting the implementation of ranked-choice voting. We delve into the reasons behind these bans, the legislative processes involved, and the key figures who championed the cause. Through these examples, we uncover the real-world problems associated with ranked-choice voting, including discarded votes, confusion among voters, and diminished confidence in the electoral process. The Foundation for Government Accountability emerges as a prominent organization in shedding light on these issues and dispelling the empty promises of ranked-choice voting proponents.

ALEC Framework –

"The American Legislative Exchange Council is America's largest nonpartisan, voluntary membership organization of state legislators dedicated to the principles of limited government, free markets and federalism. Comprised of nearly one-quarter of the country's state legislators and stakeholders from across the policy spectrum, ALEC members represent more than 60 million Americans and provide jobs to more than 30 million people in the United States.

All Americans deserve an efficient, effective and accountable government that puts the people in control. ALEC provides a forum for experts to discuss business and economic issues facing the states. The ALEC model policy library is home to dynamic and innovative ideas that reduce

the cost of everyday life and ensure economic freedom. ALEC ideas and publications are the product of countless hours of research, debate and discussion and serve as a toolkit for anyone who wants to increase the effectiveness and reduce the size, reach and cost of government. ALEC is proud to offer real solutions to the top issues facing the states, and the strength of the ALEC family is proof that good ideas are better when shared.

ALEC is a forum for stakeholders to exchange ideas and develop real, state-based solutions to encourage growth, preserve economic security and protect hardworking taxpayers. ALEC members understand the importance of hearing from all sides of an issue and value public-private partnership in policy discussions. Job creators and state legislators alike come to ALEC to offer important policy perspectives to ensure economic security and opportunity in their communities.

By joining ALEC, state legislators gain the competitive advantage of shared knowledge and experience, as they are able to learn from one another about what policies have succeeded or failed in the states. Similarly, business leaders and policy experts are able to discuss the real-world implications of potential policies with state legislators who best know their communities and economic landscapes.

At ALEC, ideas drive the discussion. Innovation and technology are at the forefront of members' conversations, and ALEC is home to experts who stay ahead of the issues and who provide continuing education to members about the effect changing issues will have on the Americans."

Summary

In American federalism, states are the fundamental level of government. This includes primacy over state and local elections, and over many aspects of federal elections. Special interests are pushing a novel and complicated election process called ranked-choice voting (RCV; and also related systems like approval voting and STAR voting). Often they try to enact these in local jurisdictions, creating a conflict between local and state election processes. They have also introduced federal legislation to force RCV on the states. This legislation would prohibit RCV and similar systems in state or local elections.

SAFEGUARD AMERICAN VOTES AND ELECTIONS ACT (SAVE ACT)

(1) In all elections, including primary elections, for any local, state, or federal public office, the following shall be prohibited:

a. Voting systems that permit a voter to vote for more than one candidate for the same office;

b. Voting systems that permit a voter to rank multiple candidates for the same office; and

c. Voting systems that reallocate a voter's vote for one candidate to another candidate for the same office.

(2) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent a locality from holding at-large elections or multi-member district elections, so long as voters have one vote per position and no votes are transferred between candidates.

(3) Any existing or future ordinance by any political subdivision of this state which is in conflict with this section is void.

(4) Any election for any public office in this state conducted under a voting system prohibited by section 1 is void, and no candidate shall be elected under such a system.

Failure of State Legislatures from protecting their states-

Holding Legislatures Accountable: Learning from the History of Ranked Choice Voting

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) has become a hotly debated topic in electoral reform, but its proponents often fail to address potential issues that it could cause. As legislatures across the country consider adopting RCV, it is essential for

them to take accountability and learn from the extensive history of this voting system.

The history of RCV dates back to the early 20th century when it was adopted in 24 U.S. cities between 1915 and 1945. Reformers used these cities as test cases to promote RCV, hoping for wider acceptance at higher levels of government. However, despite early successes, most of these cities eventually repealed RCV, leaving only one jurisdiction still using it.

Originally, RCV was embraced by allies who opposed political parties altogether, aligning with the anti-party sentiment of the time. They believed it would lead to more equitable representation. While this approach initially garnered support, it eventually proved unstable as the complexities of governance required the involvement of organized political parties.

Legislators must recognize that the history of RCV reform holds important lessons. It reveals the need for thorough research and understanding of the system's complexities before implementing any electoral changes. Accountability lies with legislators to learn from past experiences, ensuring stable and effective electoral systems for their constituents.

As we depend on our elected officials to safeguard our democratic processes, they must prioritize transparency and open discussions about potential issues related to RCV.

Making well-informed decisions requires legislators to consider the challenges and consequences associated with RCV's implementation.

By taking the initiative to study the history of RCV and acknowledging its complexities, legislators can make informed choices that align with the best interests of their constituents. Rather than rushing into untested reforms, they should prioritize transparency, education, and thoughtful consideration when shaping the future of our democratic processes. Only by doing so can we ensure that any changes to our voting systems truly serve the public's interests.

Section 1: Tennessee's Ban on Ranked-Choice Voting

In 2022, Tennessee became the trailblazer, enacting the first ban on ranked-choice voting. We examine how Senator Brian Kelsey sponsored the legislation, HB1868/SB1820, emphasizing the importance of protecting election integrity and ensuring voter clarity at the ballot box. We explore the swift passage of the bill through both houses and its subsequent signing into law by Governor Bill Lee.

Section 2: Florida's Ban on Ranked-Choice Voting

Next, we turn our attention to Florida, where Governor Ron DeSantis signed a ban on ranked-choice voting in April 2022. We delve into Senate Bill 524, introduced by Senator Travis Hutson, who highlighted the need to avoid

numbering and ranking candidates on the ballot. We explore the motivations behind Florida's crackdown on voter fraud and other election reforms, leading to the prohibition of ranked-choice voting.

Section 3: Idaho, Montana, and South Dakota's Bans on Ranked-Choice Voting

We investigate the bans on ranked-choice voting enacted in Idaho, Montana, and South Dakota. In Idaho, Representative Dale Hawkins championed H0179, emphasizing the importance of accurate vote counting and ensuring that the candidate with the most votes is elected. Similarly, Montana's Representative Lyn Hellegaard introduced HB 598, supported by Secretary of State Christi Jacobson, to prohibit ranked-choice voting statewide. We explore their concerns about eliminating top candidates, the complexity of the system, and the transformation of elections into games of odds. Finally, we examine South Dakota's ban, initiated by Senator John Wiik and sponsored by Representative Kirk Chaffee, who voiced concerns about disenfranchising voters and the need for elections to be easier and more secure.

Section 4: Growing Opposition and Future Outlook

We assess the broader landscape of bans on ranked-choice voting, with Republicans filing similar proposals in Arizona, Montana, North Dakota, and Texas. We highlight the significant increase in legislative activity aiming to prohibit

ranked-choice voting, compared to the previous year. We underscore the presence of GOP trifectas in the four states where bans have been enacted, indicating Republican control over the legislature and governor's office. We conclude this chapter by examining the significance of these bans in preserving election integrity and maintaining voter confidence.

By exploring the bans on ranked-choice voting in these five states, we shed light on the motivations behind these legislative actions and provide insights into the challenges associated with implementing ranked-choice voting. Through this examination, readers gain a deeper understanding of the ongoing debate surrounding this voting system and its potential impact on future elections.

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Chapter 29:

Over 2 Decades of Rank Choice Voting, here are the Results

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) has been a subject of extensive debate, with proponents arguing for its benefits and critics expressing concerns about its effectiveness and impact on the electoral process. This chapter explores the criticisms and challenges raised against RCV, examining examples from various jurisdictions to shed light on the potential drawbacks of this voting system.

The argument that RCV will improve with time and familiarity is called into question by examples spanning a decade. Issues such as overvoting, undervoting, and ballot confusion have persisted in elections that have utilized RCV systems. These challenges undermine claims that RCV is a superior, faster, cost-effective, and more civil voting system that enhances voter turnout.

For instance, the 2011 San Francisco Municipal Election revealed instances of overvoting, where voters marked more choices than allowed, potentially invalidating their ballots. The concerns raised by the DC Democrats further highlight the challenge of undervoting, which could be exacerbated by the adoption of RCV. Their aim is to ensure that every vote is accurately represented without introducing complexities that hinder voter engagement and participation.

In the 2022 Oakland mayoral election, issues of ballot confusion and overvoting were experienced. Incorrect instructions on RCV ballots caused voter confusion, while a significant number of ballots were overvoted, potentially leading to discrepancies in the election process.

Taken together, these examples and concerns suggest that ranked-choice voting systems have not consistently demonstrated improvements over time. The persistence of these challenges calls into question the effectiveness and reliability of RCV in achieving its purported benefits.

Furthermore, politicians and experts have raised additional concerns about RCV. Detractors argue that RCV introduces complexities and confusion, potentially disenfranchising voters and undermining the democratic principles it aims to uphold. Concerns have been expressed regarding the potential deviation of election results from

the candidate who received the most votes, creating confusion and challenging the legitimacy of the process.

By thoroughly evaluating the potential drawbacks and implications of RCV, a comprehensive understanding of its impact on electoral outcomes, voter participation, and the overall democratic process can be gained.

Bans on Ranked Choice

The recent bans on ranked-choice voting in Florida, Tennessee, Idaho, Montana, and South Dakota highlight a concerted effort to safeguard the integrity and clarity of elections. These bans were enacted in response to real-world problems associated with ranked-choice voting, including discarded votes, voter confusion, and a decline in confidence in the electoral process.

Tennessee took the lead by enacting the first ban on ranked-choice voting, emphasizing the significance of election integrity and voter clarity. Florida followed suit, implementing a ban as part of a broader initiative to combat voter fraud and reform the election process. Idaho, Montana, and South Dakota also enacted bans due to concerns over eliminating top candidates, the complexity of the system, and potential voter disenfranchisement.

These bans reflect a growing opposition to ranked-choice voting, with Republican-led initiatives seeking to prohibit its use in other states. The substantial increase in legislative

activity surrounding these bans, compared to previous years, signals an intensified focus on preserving election integrity.

This chapter examines these bans to provide insights into the motivations behind the legislative actions and shed light on the challenges associated with implementing ranked-choice voting. It contributes to the ongoing debate surrounding this voting system and its potential impact on future elections. As discussions continue, it is crucial to consider the concerns raised and carefully evaluate the implications of ranked choice voting on election outcomes, voter participation, and the overall democratic process.

The chapter also explores case studies of ranked-choice voting adoption and repeal in different locations, along with the criticisms and concerns raised by various stakeholders. By examining these examples, a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and debates surrounding ranked-choice voting can be gained.

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B. The Alameda County Registrar of Voters' Miscount

I. The Detrimental Effects of Ranked Choice Voting

A. Impact on Individual Voters

Ranked Choice Voting introduces certain effects that can impact individual voters:

1. Candidates who Lost the First Round Can Still Win

- Ranked Choice Voting allows for the possibility of candidates who initially lost in the first round to ultimately win the election. This can lead to confusion and dissatisfaction among voters who may feel that the candidate who received the most first-choice votes should be declared the winner.

2. Delayed Results and Alaska's Ranking in Election Timeliness

- The implementation of Ranked Choice Voting can result in delayed election results. Alaska's ranking in election timeliness may be affected as the additional rounds of counting and tabulation required in RCV can extend the time it takes to determine the final outcome of the election.

B. Confusion Surrounding Ranked Choice Voting

Ranked Choice Voting can be associated with confusion due to its unique voting process:

1. Multiple Rounds of Voting and Complexity

- Ranked Choice Voting involves multiple rounds of voting and tabulation. Voters are required to rank candidates in order of preference, which can be complex and confusing for some. The need for multiple rounds of counting and redistributing votes adds to the complexity and may result in challenges for voters in understanding and participating effectively in the process.

II. Low Voter Turnout and Ballot Measure 2 (Alaska)

A. Expectations for Increased Voter Turnout

With the introduction of Ranked Choice Voting, there were expectations for increased voter turnout. However, the actual voter participation fell short of these expectations.

B. Disappointing Voter Turnout in November 2022

Despite the anticipation of higher voter turnout, the November 2022 election in Alaska experienced lowest voter turnout (participation) in history of the state. This discrepancy raises questions about the effectiveness of Ranked Choice Voting in achieving its intended goal of increasing voter engagement.

III. Financial Implications of Ranked Choice Voting Implementation

A. Electronic Voting Equipment Costs

The implementation of Ranked Choice Voting in Alaska entails financial considerations, particularly related to the purchase of electronic voting equipment:

1. Purchase of Ballot Tabulators

- Ranked Choice Voting requires specialized ballot tabulators capable of handling the complexities of the voting process. The acquisition and deployment of such equipment can be costly, posing financial challenges for the state and local jurisdictions.

2. Assessing the Appropriateness of Investment Based on Alaska's Population Size

- Alaska's population size should be taken into account when assessing the appropriateness of investment in electronic voting equipment. The cost-effectiveness and scalability of the equipment need to be carefully evaluated to ensure the efficient use of resources.

IV. Disenfranchisement and Confusion among Voters

A. Negative Impact on Older and New Voters

Ranked Choice Voting can have a negative impact on certain groups of voters, particularly older and new voters:

1. Older voters may face difficulties adapting to the new voting system, potentially leading to confusion and disenfranchisement.

2. New voters, who may not be familiar with the intricacies of Ranked Choice Voting, may find the process confusing, discouraging their participation and potentially excluding their voices from the electoral process.

B. Ballot Exhaustion in U.S. Senate and House Races

Ballot exhaustion refers to the phenomenon where some ballots become inactive or "exhausted" during the counting process:

V. Concerns Raised by Political Figures and Election Studies

A. Opposition from Liberal Governors

Ranked Choice Voting has faced opposition from notable political figures, particularly liberal governors:

1. Governor Gavin Newsom's Veto in California

- Governor Gavin Newsom of California vetoed a Ranked Choice Voting bill, expressing concerns and reservations about the implementation of the system in the state.

2. Governor Charlie Baker's View in Massachusetts

- Governor Charlie Baker of Massachusetts has expressed skepticism regarding Ranked Choice Voting, raising questions about its impact and effectiveness in the state's elections.

3. Former Governor Jerry Brown of California

- Former Governor Jerry Brown of California has also raised concerns about Ranked Choice Voting, indicating potential drawbacks and challenges associated with the system.

B. Studies Highlighting Challenges with Ranked Choice Voting

Several election studies have shed light on challenges and drawbacks associated with Ranked Choice Voting:

1. San Francisco's 2002 - 2011 Municipal Election Study

- Concerns Surrounding Ranked Choice Voting in California and San Francisco

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) has been a subject of debate and controversy in California, particularly in San Francisco, before it was implemented. The proposal for Instant Runoff Voting (IRV), later rebranded as RCV, was met with skepticism by some officials and citizens alike.

In December 2000, a run-off election in San Francisco saw low voter turnout, prompting the majority of the Board of Supervisors to place Proposition A on the ballot. However, critics argued that Proposition A was not genuine reform but a step backward, resembling the days of power brokers and back-room deals. The same individuals who had previously proposed "Preference Voting," a system defeated by San Francisco voters in 1996, now introduced "Instant Run-off Voting" under a new name.

Critics of Proposition A contended that the so-called merits of IRV, such as reducing the cost to taxpayers and eliminating negative campaigning, were misleading. They argued that it would actually enrich for-profit slate card organizations, increase campaign costs, hinder meaningful debates on issues, and potentially disenfranchise language minorities and those with limited education. Furthermore, there were concerns that Proposition A might reduce the actual number of voters deciding elections, leading to a smaller portion of the population participating in run-off elections.

- A study conducted on the 2011 San Francisco Municipal Election revealed that precincts with higher proportions of Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, and older voters, as well as more progressive precincts, were more likely to have ballots containing overvotes. This highlights potential disparities and challenges faced by certain demographic groups in the context of Ranked Choice Voting.

2. Maine's 2018 Campaign and Civility Analysis

- An analysis conducted in Maine in 2018 examined the impact of Ranked Choice Voting on campaigns and civility. The study found that negative spending on campaigns increased significantly after the implementation of Ranked Choice Voting, suggesting that the system does not necessarily lead to more civil campaigns. Additionally, the study noted that Facebook advertisements mentioning congressional candidates in Maine during the first year of RCV implementation were more negative compared to similar districts in other states.

3. New York City's 2021 Primary and Exhausted Ballots

- The first ranked-choice primary in New York City, held in 2021, experienced a high rate of "exhausted" primary ballots. Nearly 15% of certified ballots did not select the top two candidates, rendering them inactive. This raised questions about the effectiveness of the system and its impact on the representation of voters' preferences.

4. Challenges in the 2022 Oakland, CA Mayoral Election

- In the 2022 Oakland, CA mayoral election, incorrect instructions on Ranked Choice Voting ballots caused confusion among voters. The discrepancy between the instructions for a "5-star" rating survey and RCV ballots added challenges to the election process. A significant number of ballots (3.5%) were overvoted, with varying rates across different precincts. This division aligns closely with the demographic division of Oakland, between higher-income areas and lower-income areas.

5. DC Democrats against Ranked Choice Voting

Overvote: The DC Democrats' concerns about overvoting relate to the potential complications and discrepancies that may arise in the voting process. In the case of the 2011 San Francisco Municipal Election, precincts with higher proportions of certain voter demographics tended to have ballots containing overvotes. This means that voters in those precincts marked more choices than allowed, potentially invalidating their ballots.

Undervote: The DC Democrats emphasize the challenge of undervoting in the District, which refers to voters not fully utilizing their options to select multiple preferences. They argue that the adoption of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) could exacerbate this issue. The party aims to ensure that every vote is counted and accurately represents the voice of

each voter, without introducing complexities that hinder voter engagement and participation.

Oakland 2022: The Oakland mayoral election in 2022 faced challenges related to ballot confusion and overvoting. Incorrect instructions on Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) ballots caused confusion among voters, as the instructions conflicted with the format of the ballot. Additionally, a significant number of ballots were overvoted, meaning that voters made more choices than allowed, potentially leading to discrepancies in the election process.

In summary, the concerns raised by the DC Democrats regarding overvoting, undervoting, and the challenges observed in the 2011 San Francisco Municipal Election and the Oakland 2022 mayoral election reflect potential issues associated with implementing Ranked Choice Voting (RCV).

VI. Implementation Challenges and Fairness Concerns

A. Demographic Disparities in Implementation

The implementation of Ranked Choice Voting has revealed disparities and challenges related to demographic factors:

1. Challenges in Low-Income and Non-White Precincts

- The implementation of Ranked Choice Voting in low-income and predominantly non-white precincts has

encountered difficulties, resulting in higher rates of disenfranchisement compared to high-income, predominantly white precincts. These disparities raise concerns about equal access to and participation in the electoral process.

2. Overvoting and Other Error Types

- Overvoting, along with other error types such as duplicate candidates and skipped ranks, pose significant issues when using Ranked Choice Voting ballots. Some precincts experience high error rates, affecting a considerable number of voters and potentially undermining the fairness and accuracy of the election results.

B. The Alameda County Registrar of Voters' Miscounts

- The Alameda County Registrar of Voters in California miscounted ballots for several ranked-choice races in the November election,

including the Oakland mayor's race. Despite calls for a recount by groups like the NAACP, these concerns were not adequately addressed. Such miscounts raise doubts about the integrity and reliability of the electoral process when implementing Ranked Choice Voting.

Other Parts of the Country that have had issues with Rank Choice Voting

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) has garnered attention in communities across the United States, but its success has been far from universal. Several states, cities, and communities have encountered issues with RCV, highlighting the need to carefully consider its implementation and potential consequences. It is essential to acknowledge these challenges and approach any electoral experimentation with caution, ensuring voters are informed and prepared for potential problems. After all, elections are the cornerstone of our republic, and any changes should be approached with careful consideration.

We delve into the adoption, challenges, and repeals of Ranked Choice Voting in various jurisdictions. RCV is a voting system that enables voters to rank candidates based on their preferences. By examining case studies from North Carolina, Pierce County (Washington), Burlington (Vermont), and Ann Arbor (Michigan), this we aims to analyze the implementation and subsequent repeal of RCV. Additionally, the we addresses concerns raised by critics, including the complexity and confusion of the electoral process, potential deviations from candidates with the most votes, complications in tabulation, voter confusion and ballot exhaustion, disenfranchisement, and bans on RCV in certain states. Through these case studies and considerations, this we provides insights into the challenges

and debates surrounding the use of Ranked Choice Voting in elections.

Case Study: North Carolina

1.1 Adoption of RCV for Judicial Vacancies

1.2 Mixed Reviews from Voters

1.3 Repeal of RCV through HB 589

Case Study: Pierce County, Washington

2.1 Adoption of RCV for County Officials

2.2 Dissatisfaction among Voters

2.3 Repeal of RCV by Voter Majority

Case Study: Burlington, Vermont

3.1 Adoption of RCV for Mayoral Races

3.2 Use in Two Mayoral Elections

3.3 Repeal due to Voter Discontent

Case Study: Ann Arbor, Michigan

4.1 Adoption of RCV for Mayoral Elections

4.2 Collaboration between Democrats and HRP

4.3 Repeal after Republican Petition Drive

Concerns Raised by Critics

5.1 Complexity and Confusion in the Electoral Process

5.2 Potential Deviations from Candidates with the Most Votes

5.3 Complications, Errors, and Time-consuming Tabulation

5.4 Voter Confusion and Ballot Exhaustion

5.5 Disenfranchisement and Distrust in the Process

5.6 Opaque, Complex, and Error-prone

Case Study: North Carolina

1.1 Adoption of RCV for Judicial Vacancies

In North Carolina, Ranked Choice Voting was adopted for filling judicial vacancies. This implementation aimed to provide a fair and efficient method for selecting judges. The use of RCV in this context allowed voters to rank their preferences for judicial candidates.

1.2 Mixed Reviews from Voters

The adoption of Ranked Choice Voting for judicial vacancies in North Carolina received mixed reviews from voters. Some appreciated the ability to express their preferences through ranking, believing it improved representation. However, others found the system confusing and felt it did not adequately reflect their choices.

1.3 Repeal of RCV through HB 589

Ranked Choice Voting in North Carolina faced a setback when it was repealed through House Bill 589. This repeal resulted from concerns about the complexity of RCV, confusion among voters, and challenges in implementing and administering the system effectively.

Case Study: Pierce County, Washington

2.1 Adoption of RCV for County Officials

Pierce County in Washington state implemented Ranked Choice Voting for county officials. The aim was to promote fairness, encourage voter participation, and ensure that elected officials had majority support.

2.2 Dissatisfaction among Voters

Despite the intention to improve the electoral process, there was dissatisfaction among some voters in Pierce County. Critics argued that Ranked Choice Voting made the election process more complex and that it did not align with their preferences.

2.3 Repeal of RCV by Voter Majority

Following voter discontent, Pierce County residents had an opportunity to decide on the future of Ranked Choice Voting through a referendum. The majority voted in favor

of repealing RCV, leading to the discontinuation of its use for county officials.

Case Study: Burlington, Vermont

3.1 Adoption of RCV for Mayoral Races

Burlington, Vermont implemented Ranked Choice Voting for mayoral races. The goal was to provide voters with a more inclusive and representative electoral system by allowing them to rank their preferred candidates.

3.2 Use in Two Mayoral Elections

Ranked Choice Voting was utilized in two mayoral elections in Burlington. The system aimed to ensure that the elected mayor had majority support and to provide voters with more options to express their preferences.

3.3 Repeal due to Voter Discontent

Despite its initial adoption, Ranked Choice Voting faced opposition and discontent among some voters in Burlington. Concerns were raised about the complexity of the system, potential confusion among voters, and doubts regarding its effectiveness. As a result, RCV was repealed in Burlington.

Case Study: Ann Arbor, Michigan

4.1 Adoption of RCV for Mayoral Elections

Ann Arbor, Michigan adopted Ranked Choice Voting for mayoral elections. The decision to implement RCV aimed to foster collaboration between Democrats and the Human Rights Party (HRP) and to provide voters with a more inclusive and representative electoral process.

4.2 Collaboration between Democrats and HRP

Ranked Choice Voting in Ann Arbor facilitated collaboration between Democrats and the HRP. The system allowed voters to rank their preferences, providing an opportunity for more diverse political voices to be heard and potentially influencing election outcomes.

4.3 Repeal after Republican Petition Drive

Despite its initial adoption and collaborative efforts, Ranked Choice Voting in Ann Arbor faced opposition. A Republican petition drive resulted in a repeal of RCV, raising concerns about the system's complexity, potential for errors, and its compatibility with the existing electoral framework.

Concerns Raised by Critics

5.1 Complexity and Confusion in the Electoral Process

Critics of Ranked Choice Voting have expressed concerns about the complexity and confusion it may introduce to the electoral process. They argue that the additional steps involved in ranking candidates can be difficult for some voters to understand and may lead to mistakes or disenfranchisement.

5.2 Potential Deviations from Candidates with the Most Votes

One of the concerns raised by critics is the possibility of Ranked Choice Voting deviating from the candidate who receives the most first-choice votes. Critics argue that this deviation can undermine the principle of majority rule and may lead to less representative outcomes.

5.3 Complications, Errors, and Time-consuming Tabulation

The tabulation process in Ranked Choice Voting has been a subject of concern for critics. They highlight the potential for complications, errors, and delays in counting and tabulating votes, which may impact the accuracy and timeliness of election results.

5.4 Voter Confusion and Ballot Exhaustion

Some critics argue that Ranked Choice Voting can create confusion among voters, particularly those who are less familiar with the system. They raise concerns about voters' ability to effectively rank candidates and the potential for ballot exhaustion, where voters do not rank all candidates, resulting in their ballots becoming inactive.

5.5 Disenfranchisement and Distrust in the Process

Concerns about disenfranchisement and a lack of trust in the electoral process have also been raised by critics of Ranked Choice Voting. They argue that the system may disproportionately affect certain demographic groups, leading to reduced voter participation and undermining the democratic principles of equal representation and inclusivity.

5.6 Opaque, Complex, and Error-prone Counting and Tabulation

Critics contend that the counting and tabulation processes in Ranked Choice Voting can be opaque, complex, and prone to errors. They raise questions about the transparency and accuracy of the tabulation methods used, which may further erode trust in the electoral system.

Bans on Ranked Choice Voting

6.1 Bans in Florida, Tennessee, Idaho, Montana, and South Dakota

Several states, including Florida, Tennessee, Idaho, Montana, and South Dakota, have enacted bans on Ranked Choice Voting. These bans reflect concerns about the potential challenges and drawbacks associated with the system and highlight the ongoing debate surrounding its use in elections.

6.2 Addressing Problems of Discarded Votes and Confusion

Bans on Ranked Choice Voting are often justified as addressing problems such as discarded votes and confusion among voters. Critics argue that the implementation of Ranked Choice Voting may inadvertently lead to these issues and that alternative voting systems should be explored.

6.3 Emphasis on Election Integrity and Clarity

The bans on Ranked Choice Voting emphasize the importance of election integrity and clarity. Critics argue that alternative voting methods that prioritize simplicity and transparency may be better suited to ensure the fairness and accuracy of election outcomes.

6.4 Opposition and Legislative Activity

The bans on Ranked Choice Voting have faced opposition from proponents of the system who argue for its benefits in promoting voter choice, representation, and majority support. Legislative activity surrounding these bans reflects the ongoing debate and differing perspectives on the merits and drawbacks of Ranked Choice Voting.

6.5 Republican Control in States with Enacted Bans

It is worth noting that states with enacted bans on Ranked Choice Voting often have Republican control. Critics argue that partisan considerations may influence the decision to ban the system, as it may be perceived to disadvantage certain political parties or candidates.

More RCV Concerns out of Virginia in 2023:

The article discusses the concerns and criticisms surrounding Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in the context of the recent Arlington Democratic Primary in Virginia. It highlights the complexity of RCV and its potential negative impact on elections. The author argues that RCV results in manufactured majorities, opaque processes, and confusion among voters.

The article mentions that under RCV, algorithms are used to compute winners, and if no candidate receives more than 50% of the first-place votes, the lowest-performing

candidate is eliminated, and their votes are redistributed based on voters' second-place preferences. The process continues until a candidate secures more than 50% of the remaining vote.

The introduction of RCV in the Arlington primary raised concerns among the community, with the Arlington NAACP President expressing worries about potential disenfranchisement or impediments to the right to vote. The article suggests that the complexity of RCV makes it difficult for election experts to track and understand.

The flaws of RCV are further discussed, including the potential for a candidate in the lead to lose the election during the process of elimination. The article also highlights the issue of exhausted ballots being eliminated in each round, resulting in fewer voters participating in subsequent elimination rounds.

The author mentions past instances where RCV has led to problems, such as tabulation mistakes in Oakland, California, and the elimination of a large number of votes in New York City and Alaska. The article suggests that the push for RCV is driven by left-wing elites and special interest groups, with the aim of weakening political parties and reshaping voting for partisan gain.

The article concludes by advocating for the banning of Ranked Choice Voting, emphasizing that Americans want a

voting system that is easy to participate in and difficult to manipulate. It mentions that three states have already passed bans on RCV, joining Florida and Tennessee in rejecting this voting method. The author asserts that RCV makes voting harder, more complicated, and susceptible to lawsuits.

Overall, the article presents a critical perspective on Ranked Choice Voting, particularly in relation to the recent Arlington Democratic Primary, highlighting concerns about complexity, manufactured majorities, disenfranchisement, and the influence of special interest groups.

Our Conclusion:

The evidence and concerns surrounding ranked-choice voting (RCV) raise significant doubts about its effectiveness and reliability as a voting system. The examples spanning a decade, such as the 2011 San Francisco Municipal Election, the 2022 Oakland mayoral election, and the 2021 New York City primary, reveal persistent issues of overvoting, undervoting, and ballot confusion. These challenges undermine the claims that RCV is a superior voting system that improves efficiency, reduces costs, and increases voter turnout.

The bans on ranked-choice voting in several states, including Florida, Tennessee, Idaho, Montana, and South Dakota, reflect a growing recognition of the problems

associated with RCV. These bans aim to protect the integrity of elections by addressing discarded votes, voter confusion, and diminishing confidence in the electoral process. The adoption of these bans, particularly in states with Republican-led initiatives, underscores the concern over preserving election integrity.

Critics of RCV, including prominent political figures like House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, US Senator Tom Cotton, and former California Governor Jerry Brown, highlight various concerns. They raise issues regarding the potential for election results to deviate from the candidate who received the most votes, the complexities introduced by RCV that can lead to confusion and errors, and the impact on voter engagement and participation. The opposition from liberal governors like Gavin Newsom of California and Charlie Baker of Massachusetts further emphasizes the complexity and potential disenfranchisement that RCV can introduce to the electoral process.

Case studies from different locations, such as North Carolina, Pierce County in Washington, Burlington in Vermont, and Ann Arbor in Michigan, also reveal mixed reviews and dissatisfaction among voters with RCV. These case studies provide further evidence of confusion, complexity, and potential disenfranchisement associated with the implementation of RCV.

Concerns have been raised about the financial implications of RCV implementation, particularly in terms of acquiring specialized electronic voting equipment and assessing the cost-effectiveness based on the population size of jurisdictions. The need for additional resources and potential financial burdens raise questions about the feasibility and practicality of implementing RCV in various contexts.

The challenges and criticisms surrounding RCV suggest that the system has not consistently demonstrated improvements over time and that the argument that RCV will improve with time and familiarity is questionable. The persistent issues of overvoting, undervoting, ballot confusion, and disenfranchisement call into question the effectiveness and reliability of RCV in achieving its purported benefits. It is essential for voters, parties, and candidates to be educated about the dangers of RCV and to address the very real concerns raised by states, cities, and communities. As the debate continues, it is crucial to evaluate the arguments from both sides and consider the experiences and perspectives of various stakeholders to make informed decisions about the future of electoral systems.

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Chapter 30:

Jungle Primary:

The Impact of Jungle Primaries on Political Parties: A Critical Analysis

The effects of jungle primaries on political parties, focusing on the potential damages incurred as a result. The paper explores the role of closed primary elections in providing political party support to candidates and enabling grassroots candidates to build their reputations within a party, subsequently receiving financial and community support for electoral success. In contrast, jungle primaries, particularly those employing a Top 2, Top 4, Top 5, or Top 6 system, require candidates to secure substantial financial backing before participating. Consequently, candidates with significant financial support are more likely to secure top positions in the primary, diminishing the influence of small donors. This shift creates a reliance on businesses, wealthy donors, unions, and other large contributors, potentially

compromising the candidates' allegiance to small donors and party members.

1. Introduction:

Political parties play a crucial role in democratic systems, facilitating the selection of candidates and fostering a sense of collective representation. Closed primary elections have traditionally served as a means for parties to support candidates and foster their growth within party ranks. However, the emergence of jungle primaries has raised concerns about the potential harm inflicted on political parties, as this section explores.

2. Closed Primary Elections and Party Support:

In closed primary elections, political parties extend their support to candidates seeking nomination. This support encompasses financial backing, community outreach, and other resources aimed at enhancing the candidate's chances of electoral success. Such backing allows grassroots candidates to establish their reputations within the party, benefitting from the party's established infrastructure and member base.

3. The Advent of Jungle Primaries:

Jungle primaries, particularly those adopting a Top 2, Top 4, Top 5, or Top 6 system, present a departure from the closed primary model. Candidates participating in jungle primaries face the challenge of accumulating substantial financial

support before entering the race. This requirement places greater importance on securing significant financial backing early on, potentially marginalizing the influence of small donors.

4. Impact on Small Donors and Grassroots Candidates:

With the shift towards jungle primaries, the electoral landscape becomes more reliant on large donors, such as businesses, wealthy individuals, and unions. The competitive nature of jungle primaries, combined with the need for substantial financial support, compels candidates to prioritize the interests of these influential contributors. As a result, candidates may become beholden to the preferences and agendas of major donors, potentially disregarding the concerns of small donors and party members.

5. Implications for Political Party Dynamics:

he growing influence of large donors in jungle primaries can disrupt the traditional power dynamics within political parties. By relying on external financial support, candidates may become less dependent on party infrastructure and membership, eroding the party's ability to shape the candidate pool and select representatives aligned with its values and principles.

6. Conclusion:

The shift towards jungle primaries, particularly those employing a Top 2, Top 4, Top 5, or Top 6 system, presents challenges for political parties. The increased emphasis on securing substantial financial support prior to entering the primary election can marginalize the role of small donors, impede grassroots candidates, and create a reliance on major donors with potentially conflicting interests. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for policymakers and party leaders as they consider the implications of jungle primaries and strive to maintain a balance between candidate independence and party cohesion. Further research is needed to explore potential reforms and alternative approaches that preserve the integrity of political parties while accommodating the desire for more inclusive primary elections.

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Chapter 31:

Pro-RCV Groups Nationwide

The Influence of Out-of-State Money in Promoting Ranked-Choice Voting

The push to implement ranked-choice voting (RCV) in Alaska and Missouri has been heavily financed by out-of-state groups, raising concerns about the influence of external interests in shaping electoral processes.

In Alaska, pro-RCV groups spent a staggering $7 million to introduce ranked-choice voting. The substantial funding allowed them to fly individuals from outside the state to collect signatures for the citizen's initiative, a practice that raised eyebrows among Alaskan residents. Many argue that only the state's citizens should be involved in signature gathering for initiatives that impact their voting system.

Similarly, in Missouri, a $2.3 million investment in signature gathering for the ranked-choice voting ballot initiative fell short of the required minimum signatures. The initiative's

funding and reliance on out-of-state resources have sparked debates about the potential impact of external influences on the state's electoral decisions.

Around the country, there are approximately 100 known pro-RCV groups, and the number may be even higher. These groups often receive financial backing from organizations like FairVote, a prominent advocate of ranked-choice voting. FairVote is funded by people like George Soros and his son.

While proponents and propaganda for ranked-choice voting argue that it can improve voter representation and encourage civil campaigning, the involvement of significant out-of-state funding raises questions about the democratic integrity of these initiatives. Critics worry that large sums of money from external sources could unduly influence the electoral process and manipulate the outcomes. In some cases 99% of the funding for a proposed citizen's intiative is coming from out of state sources (Alaska). In other cases organizations are spending millions on just the signature portion of the initative process (Missouri, groups spent $2.3 Million on the signature gathering and missed the required signatures).

As the debate over ranked-choice voting continues, concerns persist about the extent to which external interests can sway voting systems in various states.

Transparency and accountability in the funding and operations of Pro-RCV groups are critical aspects that citizens and policymakers should carefully consider when evaluating the potential adoption of ranked-choice voting in their respective states.

Pro-RCV Groups by State –

Alabama

Better Ballot Alabama

Alaska

Alaskans for Better Elections

Arizona

Voter Choice Arizona

California

California RCV Coalition

Californians for Electoral Reform

Colorado

Unite Colorado

RCV for Colorado

Connecticut

Voter Choice CT

District of Columbia

Rank the Vote DC

Florida

Florida Initiative for Electoral Reform

Rank My Vote Florida

Georgia

Better Ballot Georgia

Hawaii

Common Cause Hawaii

Idaho

Better Elections Idaho

Illinois

FairVote Illinois

Indiana

Better Ballot Indiana

Iowa

Better Ballot Iowa

Kansas

Rank the Vote Kansas

Maine

LWVME/Democracy Maine

Maryland

RCV for Maryland

Massachusetts

Voter Choice Massachusetts

Minnesota

FairVote Minnesota

Missouri

Better Ballot Kansas City

Missourians for Ranked Choice Voting

St. Louis RCV

Montana

Ranked Choice Voting Montana

Nebraska

Rank the Vote Nebraska

Nevada

Nevadans for Election Reform

New Hampshire

New Hampshire Ranked Choice Voting

New Jersey

Represent New Jersey

Voter Choice New Jersey

New York

Common Cause New York

Rank the Vote NYC

North Carolina

Better Ballot NC

Triangle Area RCV

Ohio

Rank the Vote Ohio

Oklahoma

Rank the Vote Oklahoma

Oregon

Oregon RCV

Pennsylvania

March on Harrisburg

South Carolina

Better Ballot South Carolina

Texas

Ranked Choice Voting for Texas

Utah

Utah Ranked Choice Voting

Virginia

UpVote Virginia

Washington

FairVote Washington

Wisconsin

FairVote WI

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Chapter 32:

Why I wrote this Book

Embracing Clarity and Inclusion: My Journey to Repeal Ranked Choice Voting

Inspiration often strikes unexpectedly, and in my case, it came in the form of a phone call from my beloved grandfather. As he shared his experience navigating a ranked choice voting (RCV) ballot, I couldn't help but feel the weight of confusion and frustration in his voice. This moment became the catalyst for my journey to champion a bill that would repeal RCV, ensuring a more transparent and inclusive voting process for all.

The issue of RCV's complexity and potential disenfranchisement first caught my attention when I came across a report on the 2011 San Francisco Municipal Election. The study revealed that precincts with higher proportions of Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, and older voters, as well as more progressive precincts, struggled with overvoting on RCV ballots. Similarly, low-income and

predominantly non-white precincts faced challenges in implementing RCV, leading to higher rates of disenfranchisement compared to affluent, predominantly white precincts.

One specific case that struck me deeply was the 2022 Oakland, CA Mayoral election, where incorrect instructions on RCV ballots caused confusion among voters. The consequences of such errors extended to a significant number of overvoted ballots, highlighting the disparities between higher-income areas and lower-income neighborhoods. This divide shed light on the inherent flaws within the RCV system and reinforced the urgency of my mission.

With these findings in mind, I delved into the process of crafting a bill to repeal ranked choice voting. My aim was not to discourage progress or innovation but rather to ensure that every citizen's voice is heard loud and clear. Together with a team of dedicated individuals, we meticulously studied the RCV system's intricacies and its potential impact on various communities.

The road to repeal was not without its challenges, as critics of our endeavor questioned the need for change. However, the voices of those like my grandfather, who struggled to comprehend the RCV ballot, resonated with me, and I remained steadfast in my commitment.

Throughout the journey and research, uncovering prominent leaders such as Governor Gavin Newsom of California, former Governor Jerry Brown, Governor Charlie Baker of Massachusetts, and Governor Steve Sisolak of Nevada echoed our concerns about voter confusion and the system's complexities. These voices reinforced the significance of our mission, urging us to move forward with thorough evaluation and careful consideration.

As we push for the repeal of ranked choice voting, we stand not only for clarity in the voting process but also for inclusivity and fairness. Every citizen, regardless of background or demographic, should have an equal and accessible voting experience. We aspire to create a system that unites and empowers all voters, leaving no room for disenfranchisement or confusion.

Our journey is not without obstacles, but with determination and the support of countless citizens, we move forward. Together, we embrace the vision of a voting system that empowers every voice and ensures that no one is left behind. Our pursuit is noble, and we strive to lead the way in paving a brighter, more inclusive path for our republic.

The journey to repeal ranked choice voting is not just a personal one; it's a collective journey towards a more

equitable and transparent future. Let us stand together and fight for the simple **"One Voter, One Vote"** Principle.

Illusion of Choice -

Exploring the Vast Landscapes of Alaska and Beyond: Advocating for Transparent Voting Systems

Alaska, a land of breathtaking landscapes and unique cultures, has been my home and my canvas for an incredible journey of education and advocacy. As I traversed the state, from the vibrant city of Fairbanks to the serene beauty of Ketchikan, I not only soaked in the splendor of nature but also embarked on a mission to promote transparency in our voting systems.

My travels have extended beyond the borders of Alaska, taking me to various states across the nation. I've journeyed to the bustling streets of D.C., the sunny shores of Florida and Hawaii, to the heart of Missouri, and the enchanting landscapes of Arizona. Along the way, I've had the privilege of interacting with lawmakers, secretaries of state, Lt. Governors, Governors, political candidates, and engaged voters, all in pursuit of a more informed and inclusive voting process.

The Izon Education, of which I am a proud member, has been at the forefront of this educational journey. Together, we have traveled far and wide, our experience organizing over 600 volunteers throughout Alaska and reaching out to

states like Nevada, Georgia, Virginia, Maryland, Oregon, and Hawaii to share our knowledge and insights.

From the start, our aim has been to shine a light on the concept of "Rank Choice Voting" and to demystify the promises of "Increased Choice." Through our experiences and research, we have discovered that while the idea of having more options sounds enticing, the reality is often an "Illusion of Choice." We have made it our mission to educate America about the potential pitfalls and challenges associated with rank choice voting systems.

To complement our efforts, we have produced a comprehensive 30-part video series, providing a valuable resource for anyone seeking a deeper understanding of the subject. Armed with this knowledge, we have engaged with officials from states like Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Kansas, and many others, fostering meaningful discussions about the future of our electoral processes.

As I recall my adventures in Alaska, where the wild beauty of nature mirrors the vastness of our mission, I am inspired to continue pushing forward. Our journey is not just about promoting a specific agenda; it's about empowering voters and fostering true democracy. By shedding light on the complexities of voting systems, we hope to create a future where citizens are equipped to make informed decisions that truly reflect their values and aspirations.

With each step we take, we are reminded of the profound impact education and advocacy can have on our nation. Alaska will always hold a special place in my heart, but my travels have taught me that our shared pursuit of a transparent and inclusive voting system knows no boundaries.

Together, let us continue to explore, educate, and advocate, weaving a tapestry of informed voters and resilient republic that spans from the icy peaks of Alaska to the sun-kissed lands beyond.

Embracing Engagement: Nurturing Our Future Republic

In the pursuit of truth and understanding, we have embarked on a journey to demystify the enigmatic concept of Ranked Choice Voting. Throughout these pages, we have encountered its flaws and complexities, unearthing the challenges that lay in its wake. Now, as we draw this exploration to a close, let us reflect on the significance of being engaged citizens and advocates for the betterment of our communities.

The essence of democracy lies not merely in casting a vote but in actively participating in the process that shapes our collective destiny. As we have witnessed, the implementation of electoral reforms like Ranked Choice Voting demands a comprehensive understanding and informed electorate. The burden of voter education, often

underestimated, underscores the importance of civic engagement and an educated citizenry.

It is essential that we remain vigilant in questioning the potential ramifications of any electoral reform, mindful of the intricate web of consequences that can emerge. While the allure of change may be tantalizing, we must resist the impulse to embrace reforms without thorough scrutiny. Instead, let us strive for reforms that resonate with the values of fairness, transparency, and simplicity.

Engaging with our communities means actively participating in public discourse, being aware of the challenges our fellow citizens face, and working collaboratively to find solutions. By embracing our role as informed and active participants in the democratic process, we become catalysts for positive change and growth.

Our communities are not static entities; they evolve, face challenges, and possess untapped potential waiting to be unleashed. As we navigate the complexities of electoral systems, let us not lose sight of the profound impact our collective actions can have in shaping a better future.

Empowering one another with knowledge and fostering open dialogues is the key to nurturing our democratic future. Let us bridge the gap between political ideologies and cultivate an environment of mutual understanding. In

doing so, we can foster a sense of unity that transcends party lines and strengthens the fabric of our society.

As we bid farewell to the exploration of Ranked Choice Voting, let us not rest on our laurels but rather embrace the responsibility of staying informed and engaged. Together, we can work towards a future where our democratic processes are truly representative and accountable.

In this pursuit, we are not just passive observers; we are active participants in shaping the course of history. Let us seize this opportunity to be agents of change, empowering our communities to grow and thrive.

As the final page of this book turns, let it serve as a reminder that our journey towards a more perfect democracy is ongoing. Let us, as engaged citizens, take up the mantle of responsibility, for the future of our communities and our nation rests in our collective hands. Together, let us work tirelessly to foster an inclusive and prosperous society, where the voices of all are heard, and the spirit of democracy is strengthened for generations to come, a future without Rank Choice Voting, which truly is an Illusion of Choice.

Quotes from various leaders about Ranked Choice Voting

'Former President Donald Trump expressed strong criticism of ranked-choice voting systems during a rally in Anchorage,

Alaska. He specifically targeted Alaskan Senator Lisa Murkowski, who voted to convict him during his second impeachment trial. Trump accused her of being responsible for the state adopting ranked-choice voting, which he referred to as "ranked choice crap voting."

Trump claimed that ranked-choice voting makes it difficult to determine the winner and can result in candidates with lower rankings winning the election. He referred to the system as "a total rigged deal" and compared it to other things he perceives as unfair in the country.' ~ President Donald Trump (4,6)

"Someone could get the most votes, and not win!" said McCarthy. "So if you come in 3rd, you win. What? 'I got a lot of second votes, I got a lot of 3rd vote — what does that mean?'" - House Speaker Kevin McCarthy (5)

"Ranked-choice voting is a scam to rig elections." - US Senator Tom Cotton

"Ranked choice is an experiment that has been tried in several charter cities in California. Where it has been implemented, I am concerned that it has often led to voter confusion, and that the promise that ranked choice voting leads to greater democracy is not necessarily fulfilled. The state would benefit from learning more from charter cities who use ranked choice voting before broadly expanding the system." - Governor Gavin Newsom (1)

"I don't want to overly complicate that process to such an extent that people start to wonder, you know, what is it that's actually going on here." - Gov. Charlie Baker, Massachusetts Governor (3)

"Ranked choice voting is overly complicated and confusing. I believe it deprives voters of genuinely informed choice." - Former California Governor Jerry Brown (3)

"'60% of Alaska voters voted for a Republican, but thanks to a convoluted process and ballot exhaustion—which disenfranchises voters—a Democrat 'won.'" - US Senator Tom Cotton (3)

"People are starting to look nationally and say 'this could be the answer.' I think they need to be cautious about that. ... It's very confusing." - Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska) on Ranked-Choice Voting (3)

"By its very design, RCV slows down the process of counting the votes and introduces an array of ambiguities into what should be a simple process of determining a clear winner." - David Bossie (3)

"As one might imagine, this process often is riddled with errors. Not only can election results take weeks or even months to tabulate, but sometimes the wrong candidate wins." - Victoria Marshall, The Federalist (3)

"Unlike ordinary elections and ordinary runoffs, voters are required to make predictions about who will be left standing following an initial tabulation of the votes." - Professor James G. Gimpel on Ranked-Choice Voting (3)

"It is voter suppression... I hope that the courts see that ranked choice voting is not right for democracy." - NAACP's Hazel Dukes(1)

"Every state should ban ranked-choice voting. It is the real VOTE DENIAL." - J. Christian Adams (3)

"Ninety-five percent of the people talking to me about our new ranked-choice voting system were saying how utterly confusing it was." - Senator Dan Sullivan (3)

"Clearly, Ranked-Choice Voting is a confusing mess that makes voting harder and elections less transparent. Yet, millions of dollars are being spent to sell the public on RV, to campaign for ballot measures, and to lobby lawmakers to expand it in states across the country." - Jason Snead, Honest Elections Project (3)

"The Ranked-Choice Voting process makes vote counting unnecessarily complex. In New York, it required eight rounds of tabulation." - Trent England(3)

"Complexity drives down turnout. That's obvious. And CV advocates admit that their system needs expensive education campaigns to help voters make sense of it. Even

with all that, people still wind up disenfranchised." - Trent England(3)

"The obvious truth is that RCV is COMPLICATED, difficult to understand, and relies on a counting process shrouded in mystery." - David Bossie(3)

"Ranked-Choice Voting is a confusing and opaque process that is prone to errors." - Hans von Spakovsky(3)

"RCV isn't the path to a better election system, just a more COMPLICATED one that DISENFRANCHISES Americans and fuels doubt and confusion. Ranked-choice is clearly the wrong choice for voting in America." - Jason Snead(3)

"Between voter confusion, high rates of ballot exhaustion and the difficulty of tabulating the results, Ranked-choice voting increases voter disenfranchisement, distrust in the process and deters candidates from taking stances on issues important to every Arizonan." - Rep. Austin Smith, Arizona State Representative(3)

"We should be finding ways to continue our progress, not pushing a rushed constitutional change that would make our system more confusing, error-prone and exclusionary." - Gov. Steve Sisolak, Nevada Governor on Ranked-Choice Voting (2)

“Under ranked-choice voting, the city of San Francisco has seen a depressed voter turnout in communities of color.” -

Councilman Daneek Miller (D-Queens) Co-chair of the Black, Latino & Asian Caucus of NY City Council (1)

"When you go to the voting machine, you want to think of your vote as counted, not having it counted among four people." - Khalid Baylor, President of the Vulcan Society, comprised of firefighters of color (1)

"Every vote should count, and every vote should be as simple as 'I picked my top candidate.'" - State Senator Mark Koran (R-Minnesota) (1)

"Now that our black and brown communities have found electoral success, the powerful special interests want to change the rules on us." - Councilwoman Adrienne Adams (D-Queens) Co-chairwoman of the Black, Latino & Asian Caucus (1)

"I stand with a bipartisan group of politicians, advocates, and academics in opposing Ranked Choice Voting because when it comes to elections, every vote cast in our state should count. The evidence and experience from around the country suggests that Ranked Choice Voting will work against this goal, adding unnecessary confusion and potentially reducing voter turnout. We need to be spending our time and resources to make it easier for all Alaskans to speak up at the ballot box, not harder."- Former U.S. Senator Mark Begich (D-Alaska) (1)

"[W]e need to remove barriers to voting, and I think ranked-choice voting is counter to that. My research shows that when you make things more complicated, which this does, there's going to be lower turnout."- Jason McDaniel - Associate Professor of Political Science, San Francisco State University (1)

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